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STUDIES IN PARLIAMENT.

STUDIES IN PARLIAMENT.

A SERIES OF SKETCHES

OF

LEADING POLITICIANS.

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By R. H. HUTTON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It is almost needless to say that the following outlines do not pretend to exhaust, or half exhaust, the number of Statesmen fairly entitled to be called leading politicians of the day. Those included have been chosen partly from accidental causes bringing special names recently into prominence, partly from the circumstance that special political careers were more familiar to the writer than those of other politicians of equal or greater note. There seemed no impropriety in adding estimates of the two great Statesmen whom we lost last year, as their influence will certainly not cease to be felt in English politics for many years to come. It is perhaps still less necessary to add that these Sketches do not pretend to be individually exhaustive of their subjects. They are, for the most part, opinions not hastily formed, but of course formed without any advantages except those of an outside, though interested, observer of the political world.

27th January, 1866.

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STUDIES IN PARLIAMENT.

I.

LORD RUSSELL.

Lord Russell has lived through a distinct change in the fancy of the great English middle class, which has to some considerable extent been unfavourable to his own popularity. All, except very young men, can remember the time when Lord John Russell had a firmer hold on the imagination and the confidence of the English people than all the other statesmen of his day. A fanciful theorist of a future period might date the change from the time when, by his elevation to the House of Lords,

he lost that right to be called Lord John, which expressed him with a sort of familiar and essentially English brevity rather tending to endear him and his achievements to the popular mind. But such a theorist would be wrong. The slow change in popular taste which substituted Lord Palmerston for Lord John Russell as the national hero, had been going on long before the final preference of the latter in 1860. No doubt the crisis came during the Crimean war, when Lord John's desertion of his colleagues at a critical moment, and his conspicuous failure as a diplomatist at the Conference of Vienna, gave the *coup de grâce* to that feeling of half familiar respect with which the previous generation had regarded him. But the change was not, we believe, mainly—certainly not wholly—due to those of his own infirmities which then, for the first time, were brought close to the popular eye. Even before the Crimean war there had been a perceptible change in the political ideal of the English middle class. The late Sir Robert Peel, though never the idol of the popular imagination, like Lord John Russell—indeed it was impossible

to feel a *familiar* affection for so much pomp of manner—had forced them to perceive a certain deficiency in Lord John's faculties for finance—a deficiency even of sympathy with the commercial and business-like side of the nation's mind—which had no doubt diminished the full satisfaction with which they dwelt upon the familiar lines of expression in the character of their political hero. Then his unquestionable "earnestness"—which was not the less a popular quality to the former generation that it combined a Whig nobleman's imperiousness with just a flavour of the favourite dissenting minister of the district,—his strength of conviction which excited their confidence, and the touch of priggishness in its expression, which made it a familiar feature without annoying their taste, —these were qualities which were much more in popular request during the era of Lord John Russell's ascendancy than they have been since Lord Palmerston passed him in the race. The latter, like his predecessor, made himself thoroughly familiar to the popular imagination, and "old Pam" was spoken of during the last years of his life with as

much affectionate freedom as "little Johnny" was a quarter of a century ago; but the characteristic difference was that the image of the one was always associated with something jocular, while that of the other was always marked with some curt incisive political morality or rebuke. The middle-class mind is not now "earnest," as it was under the long political suffering to which the Reform Bill brought relief. The ancient preference for cakes and ale over the moralities of that day has to a great extent returned, and Lord Russell has lost not less by this change in the popular taste than he has by the exposure of personal infirmities which were not popularized to the imagination of the middle class till he failed conspicuously, first in finance, next and worst in party loyalty, and last as a diplomatist. He has lost ground not only by bringing his own faults distinctly under popular view, but also and even more by the dwindling earnestness of the popular taste.

One of the most striking characteristics of Lord Russell which popularized him, if we may use that expression, so early in life, is a certain English

baldness of mind which helps him to blurt out his convictions, however hasty, in a short, naked kind of way that at once makes them very visible to persons of all classes, though not always visible in their most ornamental form. Some of his phrases, remarkable for their faulty directness, still linger amongst us — as, for instance, that happy term invented by him, we think, expressly for those qualities of the Tory Reform Bill of 1859 "which were conspicuous by their absence." On any occasion on which it is the highest propriety to cut direct to your point, Lord Russell has always been inimitable. Nothing will ever be written more pungent or successful than his curt reply to the Dean of Hereford, acknowledging the receipt of the letter "expressing his intention to violate the law." There, as not unfrequently in political life, the curtest way of uncovering his thought was the best, as it is usually the most graphic. But there are subjects on which all opinions are apt to be doubtful, and most opinions are sure to be false. And when a man, even of a certain acuteness of mind, forms hasty views on such subjects, and then thrusts them

out into the light, without that decent covering of words which is meant to tone down the conspicuous inadequacies of nature, the effect is, as we have called it, bald. Lord Russell has always shown something of this baldness of thought, and coinciding, as his baldest thoughts often did, with the prejudices of an English public, no doubt it was one spring of his great early popularity. To illustrate what we mean, take the little volume of essays which he published in 1821 at the age of twenty-nine—not at an age when their baldness could be ascribed to boyishness—and read its opening sentences. "We often hear of the pride of the English. It is in fact the quality which distinguishes them from the nations of the Continent, *who are on their side remarkable for vanity.*" What a happy arrogance of English generalization! "The nations of the Continent remarkable for vanity!" And the essayist goes on, of course, to say of the French, "Even now their zeal for a free constitution, if carefully sifted, will be found to arise very much from a notion that a limited monarchy is the fashion; and they think it would

not become the Great Nation not to have as good a Chamber of Deputies, and as much liberty of the press, as their neighbours." France is all envy of the English, one perceives, who furnish the central ideas round which the life of "the nations of the Continent" is moulded. Is it possible to conceive a happier instance of the baldness of popular English thought and of real pride and delight in that baldness? No doubt to this quality Lord John Russell owed the rapidity with which he engraved his image on the English middle class.

And perhaps, too, Lord John also owed to his baldness of intellect much of his power as a parliamentary thinker and parliamentary debater. For in politics this quality is far from prejudicial, though it is fatal to any fine conceptions of speculative questions. Political problems are rarely susceptible of much *nuance*; indeed, if they need it, as they sometimes do, they never get it; for the popular mind and popular bodies which decide political issues agree to ignore all delicate shades of distinction; and hence a complete indifference to all

such finer discriminations is a great source of power in Parliament, and the opposite constitution of mind, as we see in Mr. Gladstone, a considerable source of weakness. Lord Russell has always caught, and always been compelled by his nature to catch, only the plain broad aspects of a question; every subtlety has been "conspicuous by its absence" from his mind. He once, in the volume before named, wrote an imaginary autobiography of the Wandering Jew, the principal feature of that gentleman's peculiar moral experience being that he early learned the danger of indiscriminate charity, and "held no humanity real which did not walk between discretion and emotion." A Whig Wandering Jew, convinced by centuries of remorse and guilt, of the evil of the old poor law! It is impossible not to recall Mr. Carlyle's humorous reflection on the subject:—"It was, therefore, above all things necessary that out-door relief should cease. What then did Great Nature do? *She created a race of men to whom the cessation of out-door relief seemed the one thing needful,*"—and he might have added, with regard to Lord Russell at least, the one im-

portant yield of the experience of all the ages since the Crucifixion. But this inability to enter into any subtlety of thought, any phase of speculation far from the plain broad present aspect of affairs, was an immense advantage to a parliamentary statesman in ensuring the first requisites of popular measures, straightforwardness and comprehensibility. Nor was it less an advantage in debate—at least when accompanied, as it was in Lord Russell's case, by a commanding position. Let a strong, self-confident mind simply uncover its own cold indifference to attack, and no skilfulness of verbal reply will be really so effective. Lord Russell's crisp, curt parliamentary scorn was more effective on his antagonists than all Mr. Disraeli's epigrammatic point.

Then, whatever Lord Russell's faults, of all statesmen of our own day, he has ever shown the most deep and ingrained sympathy with popular *freedom*. In this respect neither Lord Palmerston nor Mr. Gladstone, nor any other of our statesmen, can really approach him. Mr. Gladstone is more tender and humane, has a far deeper horror of popular *suffering*, and therefore of war, than Lord Russell; for Lord

Russell's sympathy with freedom, like all true sympathy with freedom, has something a little sharp and stern about it—a little of the old Puritan carelessness whether it be happy or unhappy freedom. This is a mood of mind which the present age is almost learning to ignore, but its depth in Lord Russell has done us good service, not only in the agitation for Catholic Emancipation and Reform, but recently in saving us, through him, from casting in our sympathies as a nation with the slave-owners of the Southern States.

Perhaps the greatest real defect in Lord Russell's political character is that profound appreciation of the value of his own services which has so often led him into acts of disloyalty and semi-treachery to his party and closest political friends. The nation heartily agreed with him in his judgment on the mismanagement of our forces in the Crimea, and yet it never forgave him the cold *insouciance* with which he tried to shake off his share in the responsibility for it by avowing his inability to resist Mr. Roebuck's vote of censure, and retiring at that critical moment from the field. Again, his exposure

to the House of the quarrel between the Queen and Lord Palmerston in 1851 was universally felt to be a cynical and disloyal act. Indeed, his treatment of his friends and subordinates has been proverbially wanting in that sort of loyalty which was one of the best characteristics of Lord Palmerston. Lord Russell has never felt what he owed to others as he has felt what others owed to him.

Yet, in spite of this grave deficiency, he has unquestionably earned more from this generation than any living statesman. He has carried the Constitution triumphantly through its greatest crisis, and rendered it as dear to, as it was once hateful to, the English middle class. He has forced the principle of religious toleration in its widest bearings on the Legislature. He has always resisted sacerdotal tyranny, though sometimes with the heated anger of a mob rather than the wisdom of a statesman. And he has kept England through many great crises true to the cause of freedom on both sides of the Atlantic, in America, in France, in Spain, in Italy, and, in a futile and helpless way,

also in Poland and Denmark, and sometimes when scarcely any other man but himself would have had the courage to say what he said, or to resist the tide of feeling as he resisted it.

II.

MR. GLADSTONE

MR. GLADSTONE'S curious relation to so many different elements in the State reminds us of some of those vexatious Chinese puzzles in which a medley of differently shaped pieces of wood are closely ringed together round their thin middle section, and the riddle is, how they are to be decomposed without violence. Of course, a sensible man gives it up at once, and of course it turns out to be quite simple when he is told. Mr. Gladstone is the uniting band of such a political and moral puzzle, and a very simple puzzle when you see how it grew together. He connects the commercial—even the ultra-commercial—with the ultra-ecclesiastical element in the

State. He links the school of aristocratic criticism with the school of democratic progress. He mediates between a "spirited foreign policy" and the soft principles of the peace, or the selfish principles of the non-intervention, party. He cares even more than trades' unions for the welfare of the working men; more than the manufacturers for the interests of capital; more for the cause of retrenchment than the most jealous and avowed foes of Government expenditure; more for the spread of education than the advocates of a compulsory national system; more for careful constitutional precedent than the Whigs; and more for the spiritual independence of the Church than the highest Tories. He unites cotton with culture, Manchester with Oxford, the deep classical joy over the Italian resurrection and Greek independence, with the deep English interest in the amount of the duty on Zante raisins and Italian rags. The great Railway Boards and the Bishops are about equally interested in Mr. Gladstone. The former look to him as the most likely man to revolutionize the railway system of England; the latter as the most likely man to revolutionize

the ecclesiastical system in dealing with heresy. That is a striking illustration of the character of his power,—which consists in the moral colouring which Mr. Gladstone naturally gives to material interests, and in the material colouring which he is also apt to give to moral interests. Any one who has read carefully his great financial speeches, knows that the commerce of the country becomes transfigured in Mr. Gladstone's mind into the greatest of moral agencies. Any one who studies his books on Church matters, or his tract on the Royal supremacy in relation to spiritual tribunals, will see at once that he treats moral agencies less with the subtlety of a pure thinker, or the warmth of an ardent believer, than with the ingenuity of an acute administrator who looks at them as subordinate to the ecclesiastical institutions to which they give rise. Mr. Gladstone's mind mediates between the moral and material interests of the age, and rests in neither. He moralizes finance and commerce, and (if we may be allowed the barbarism) institutionalizes ethics and faith.

There are three cardinal facts which need to be

remembered in estimating Mr. Gladstone's powers and difficulties as a statesman. He is a Lancashire man, an Oxford thinker, a Peelite politician. In some respects all these influences have worked differently, and in some, still more important perhaps, they have co-operated. In Lancashire he learnt that profound appreciation of the might and right of capital without which probably no creative financier can be made. It was the blood of the Lancashire spinner in the late Sir Robert Peel, that made him, in spite of his protective prejudices, the first great modern reformer of our finance,—the man who taught far more liberal theorists how to multiply the resources and economize the expenditure of the State. Similarly, it was the business element, combining with great natural powers, in the late Mr. James Wilson which gave fertility and tension to his financial conceptions, and made them greatly superior in practical originality to those of the only considerable Whig financier the country has recently produced—Sir G. Cornewall Lewis. The Lancashire feeling for capital is strong in Mr. Gladstone. He muses on the money market; he loves to ponder on the resources which a low rate

of interest might open to the Government, in the night-watches. He does his work at the Treasury, not as a matter of business, but as a matter of love. As a novelist's mind *swarms* expedients for bringing out the points of his favourite characters, Mr. Gladstone's mind swarms financial ideas small and great. He thinks of the revenue and the productive power of the country as a manufacturer thinks of his manufactory, and the chance of striking a new vein of profit. And his inventive power is greater than his judgment, though this is, however, to some extent steadied by the instinct of the orator, which tells him which of his ideas it will be easy, and which impossible, to present in a telling and popular form to the country. It is in great measure these oratorical instincts which oblige him to dwell on the moral aspects of material wealth,—the only aspects in which economy becomes a really popular topic.

But Mr. Gladstone is so much more than a Lancashire man, that to most minds the first idea which presents itself in connection with his name is that of classical taste and scholastic subtlety. No doubt these qualities give the charm even to his financial

ingenuity and resource. And while his Oxford training greatly widened the scope of his genius, it tended, we think, to strengthen his natural disposition to accept the actual condition of things as his starting-point, and rather choose his principles by carefully examining what was open to him, than to mould his policy resolutely to first principles. If any one of our readers has attempted to read perhaps the most difficult book in the English language, Mr. Gladstone's "Church Principles considered in their Results," he will see at once what we mean; and will see, too, how the Oxford of Mr. Gladstone's University life,—the Oxford before "the movement of 1833,"—the Oxford which made the Aristotelian dogma that virtue is the half-way house between two opposite vices its ethical rule, and which took the Church as it was as the true starting-point in religion,—the Oxford which had not yet begun to dig after the roots of principle,—tended to turn Mr. Gladstone's acutely discriminating powers towards consequences rather than first principles. This habit it is which, while it secures for Mr. Gladstone a practical tone, denies him the highest triumphs of an otherwise scarcely rivalled

oratory. Mr. Bright excels him as a mere orator, because Mr. Bright fetches his inspiration from the deepest fountains of human passion. Mr. Gladstone does not sink his rhetorical wells deep. He keeps in the middle region of practical fancy, of *applied* imagination. Indeed, Mr. Gladstone's Oxford training has, in one direction, injured his parliamentary influence. He does not go deep into human nature for his contrasts; he does not make them strong and broad; and he draws his practical distinctions out too fine, so as to provoke comment and invite retort. We remember some one's remarking years ago on a significant sequence in the marginal index to two paragraphs in Hallam's "Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." It was about the Jansenists, and Mr. Hallam had noted in the margin of one paragraph, "The Jansenists take a distinction;" in the margin of the next, "*And* are persecuted." That would tell the history of many of Mr. Gladstone's parliamentary difficulties. He takes distinctions which he should ignore, *and* is persecuted.

The Peelite education of Mr. Gladstone in political life is the third great influence that has made him

what he is. It tended, no doubt, to enhance his power as an administrator, and to impress to some extent upon him that *prudential* character which so strikingly characterized all Sir Robert Peel's administration. Mr. Gladstone's tendency was virtually, we have seen, to look rather at consequences than principles, to consider even "Church principles in their *results!*" But, as in most original Lancashire men, there are wild possibilities in Mr. Gladstone, a craving for great schemes, an enterprising force, of which Sir Robert Peel knew nothing. No doubt the influence of Sir Robert Peel was *taming* on Mr. Gladstone's mind. It made him look at things with the eyes of cautious, slow country gentlemen, as well as simply in the consequences as *he* saw them. Sir Robert Peel's influence again fostered the pacific and commercial side of Mr. Gladstone's imagination and sentiment, and also did something to teach him, as far as he could be taught, to think of the public's *sleepy* view of his plans. It probably strengthened greatly the administrative powers of Mr. Gladstone's mind, balanced it with whatever of caution and judgment it has, did something to diminish his

tendency to too nice distinctions, but very much heightened the tendency to ignore first principles, and start from things as he found them.

These are the influences which seem to us to have made Mr. Gladstone what he is—a statesman of the very highest class of the second rank—or, as some one epigrammatically said of him, "a statesman of second-rate intellect in a first-rate state of effervescence:" a statesman on whom we could scarcely rely to direct our policy in moments of difficulty, or to sway alone the mind of Parliament; but yet a statesman of far greater power than those who would be competent to guide and lead him—a statesman of wonderful resource on all subjects, of fine insight on many—but not a statesman of deeply-matured political principles, nor one of the safest judgment.

III.

MR. CARDWELL.

MR. CARDWELL, more than any living politician, has all the "notes" of a Peelite. Now the Peelites proper were at one time a somewhat remarkable variety among English political species. Of course, as their name imports, they were Conservatives with an avowed preference for the late Sir Robert Peel's policy of relaxation—"soft shell" Conservatives, as the Americans might say. The same tendency which made them prefer the *via media* opened up by Sir Robert Peel between a Liberal and Tory policy to either of those opposite schools, inclined many of them — Mr. Gladstone and Lord Herbert, for instance, and we believe also Mr. Cardwell—to the

same sort of *via media* on ecclesiastical matters, and made them at one time more or less of Puseyites. They shrank too decidedly from the adoption of a clear, distinguishing principle, to take up either with the unqualified principle of authority in Church matters or the unqualified principle of individual inquiry; and they more or less preferred to test by expediency, by *results*, the extent to which they were prepared to go in admitting the modifying influence of the one principle on the other. In Mr. Gladstone, however, it seems probable that warm popular sympathies, though for a time kept down beneath the superinduced intellectual complexities, were really among the essential elements of his character. He was an orator by nature, and an orator must receive from those whom he addresses, as he himself says, "in vapour, what he pours back upon them in a flood." But the Peelites as Peelites were not properly men of popular sympathies. They were for the most part men with hereditary faculties for business—Sir Robert Peel himself, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Cardwell, all having derived their means from large Lancashire houses, manufacturing or mercan-

tile—men deeply tinged with Oxford culture of that tone at once prudential and pious which marked the Oxford of the last generation. Indeed we may almost say that the most characteristic "note" of the Peelites was a sort of financial piety. Mr. Gladstone still feels finance almost a department of religion; and the late Lord Herbert, Mr. Cardwell, and even their teacher, Sir Robert Peel himself, ever spoke on finance as if it were a topic dearer to their feelings, nearer to their hearts, than any of purely political importance. They were assuredly the first statesmen to make the nation feel that the subject was capable of a certain harmony and even beauty of treatment which raised it out of the department of mere business into one of æsthetic art. As administrators the Peelites have always been men of skill; as thinkers they have been somewhat pallid moderates, anxious to save traditions by timely modifications; and as speakers they have usually aimed more or less at the weighty and important manner of their leader, the late Sir Robert Peel.

In all these respects Mr. Cardwell is a true Peelite, and so far as it is possible to judge him from so

short a political career as twenty-three years, we should say that he is politically the thinnest, and personally the least original, of that highly cultivated but rather tepid variety of political species. Mr. Gladstone is very much indeed *besides* a Peelite; the late Sir James Graham was by blood a bold and somewhat capricious border chief, who for a time found it convenient to extend his claims from the Whig dominions into the Debateable land beyond, as his ancestors at Netherby had often set him the example of doing with regard to more substantial possessions; and the great Sir Robert Peel himself was much more than a Peelite, for he founded the school by opening his mind to new light which, had it taken possession of him earlier in his career, would probably have made him a great, though politic and wary, Liberal chief. But Mr. Cardwell, though he has now for a long time belonged to the Liberal party, has just that neutral tint about his politics still—that slightly pallid shimmer about his political interests and policy—which marks the love of a *via media*. It may be said that the great statesman whom we have so recently lost, Lord

Palmerston, was in the same sense as Mr. Cardwell, a midway man, a statesman who had no particular view, and therefore held his tongue, on many things. And this was true of him in relation to Home politics, but then his natural political vigour found vent in very unique and energetic views on foreign policy and on certain allied subjects like the slave-trade squadron. There is scarcely a politician who has so long occupied a somewhat prominent position as Mr. Cardwell who has not impressed himself more strongly on some one or other of the many departments of politics. He has made many neat financial speeches, showing lucid economic knowledge, but no great power of driving that knowledge into parliamentary brains. He defended the repeal of the corn laws against the Protectionists with a courtly kind of tact and a clear understanding of the point at issue. He has from time to time been impressive on the subject of timber, and persuasive on that of sugar. He is always business-like on such subjects, and presents them with a certain fluent grace that renders them palatable to the House. But he has taken but little part in the higher politics, and what

little part he has taken has scarcely added to his weight. He was never so prominent as in moving the vote of censure on the Tory Government of 1858 for that flippant and unworthy philippic called a despatch in which Lord Ellenborough denounced Mr. Cardwell's friend Lord Canning for his Oude Confiscation Proclamation. The position was in some respects a very embarrassing one, for all parties were in the dark as to the true meaning of the measure they were discussing. Neither did the Tory Government of the day know what policy they were condemning when they so bitterly censured Lord Canning's proclamation, nor did the Liberal Opposition know what policy they were defending when they censured the censure. As it subsequently turned out Lord Canning's drift was something quite different from what either his English friends or his English enemies had conceived it, and was not intended as a penal measure at all, either to the Oude peasantry, as his Tory critics supposed, or to the Oude aristocracy, as his Liberal advocates supposed, but as a remedial measure, finding an excuse in a great rebellion for the alteration of an unsatisfactory

land tenure. This completely ambiguous condition of the true point at issue, however; exactly suited Mr. Cardwell. His official and administrative sense was outraged by the uncourteous and public rebuke administered at so critical a moment to the great man who had stood so firm during the shock of the Indian mutiny, and he probably felt more at ease in building his case entirely on the formal point as to the manner of the censure and its publication, than he would have done had he been able to discuss the main issue and place Lord Canning's case on its merits. Under the circumstances no doubt he was quite right, though it was also nearly inevitable that Parliament should have been disinclined to pass any opinion while still in the dark as to the real meaning of the policy censured by the Government, and therefore that the attempt to arraign the Government should collapse as it did. We refer to it only because it is characteristic of Mr. Cardwell that his most prominent political appearance should have been on a question of official dignity—on a motion to condemn the *mode* of a certainly rash, unseasonable, and uncourteous rebuke—rather

than on any substantial political issue. He was, indeed, perfectly right to take the course he did, and the sober, moderate, dispassionate tone of his smooth and lucid address probably stated the case as well as a case so ill understood in its larger bearings could have been stated. But then there is something remarkable in the fact that Mr. Cardwell has never on any other occasion taken so prominent a position — that the indecorum, the sin against official courtesy and justice committed by the Tory Government, stirred him more deeply apparently than any more substantial political question during his whole parliamentary career. We may see something of the same feeling at work in his modified defence of Governor Eyre. It is not probable that he quite approves of the violence of Mr. Eyre's proceedings, but he probably shrinks from the shock to the sensitive nerves of official responsibility which might be given by censuring a governor for an extreme exercise of his discretion. In short he takes the formal official view—the departmental view.

And this really indicates, we think, the character of his political mind—lucid, indeed, and cultivated,

but decidedly official, displaying a predominant attention to manner, and perhaps even a languid interest in substantial political issues. At the Board of Trade he instituted reforms, which were however reforms of official method. As Secretary for Ireland he passed one Act bearing on the question of tenant right, which, had it not been purely permissive, might perhaps have had valuable results, but, as it was, proved fruitless. As Colonial Secretary he has been scarcely the equal of his late Under-Secretary, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, and especially as regards the affairs of New Zealand, till lately the most trying part of his duties, has shown but little grasp of the true situation of the colony, and a disposition to be influenced by the representations of the episcopal party there—the fundamental misconceptions of which he is now himself probably beginning to discover. This false bias was due in some measure perhaps to the superior refinement of the episcopal party in New Zealand, and to their professions of greater humanity and larger sympathy with the native population; but it was characteristic of Mr. Cardwell, who has always shown a certain

tendency to take hold of the deeper questions by the skin, if we may so say, rather than to get a more substantial grasp of them.

Mr. Cardwell has learned more of the parliamentary art than of the political vigour of his master, the late Sir Robert Peel. No one is more successful in his manner of addressing the House, or of receiving a deputation. There is a decorous solemnity about him, not formal enough to be pedantic, and still less eager enough to be enthusiastic, which exactly hits the taste of men of business, and of practical men generally, with regard to subjects which they think important, and yet on which they dread most of all things anything like intensity of feeling. Then, though he is seldom rhetorical, on a proper occasion he can say an eloquent thing in an historical way. His *éloge* on Lord Palmerston to his Oxford constituents the other day was precisely the right thing—equally far removed from a funeral sermon and a party panegyric. "The Abbey," he said, "is not the boundary of his tomb, for as the saying is, of illustrious men the whole earth is the tomb." And he went on to remark that Lord Palmerston had been a member of the

House of Commons for one-tenth of the whole period of its existence. That is just the dignified kind of eloquent remark and the striking popular observation which the late Sir Robert Peel would himself have uttered upon a like occasion. And Mr. Cardwell is as happy as his master in his manner of receiving a deputation. There is a fine shade of difference in his mode of addressing the outer world and addressing the House of Commons. To the House he is respectful confidence itself; but with his manner to the external public, though still courtesy and respect itself, he blends a judicious flavour of official condescension. The courtesy with which he bows to influential deputies, and distinguishes the points in their speeches with which he wishes to mark his agreement by a slight inclination of the head, is very happy, and no less so is the suppressed sigh of self-compassion with which he turns resignedly to *uninfluential* members of the deputation, of whose remarks the rest are obviously impatient, and speedily extinguishes them by his polite but undisguised fortitude. If a happy parliamentary and official manner could make a great statesman, Mr.

Cardwell would unquestionably be one. In the coming session he bids fair to be one of the most prominent figures, and it is no doubt *possible* that he will come out of the Jamaica imbroglio a much more distinguished statesman than he has hitherto been. Still, on the whole, we think the chances are the other way. There is a certain thinness, to use a favourite metaphor of Mr. Carlyle's, about all his political achievements hitherto, that promises badly for the future. He wants, apparently, force of character more than special capacity of any kind. His cold bluish eyes express a sort of superficiality and externality of nature. He was, we believe, one of the executors of Sir Robert Peel's will; and at present he bids fair to be better remembered in the corresponding political capacity than for any original policy or characteristic of his own.

IV.

MR. DISRAELI.

Mr. Disraeli has within the last few sessions lost much ground with the party which he leads. Indeed, as the number of young and cultivated thinkers increases in the Opposition ranks, it becomes obvious enough that Mr. Disraeli's power lessens. The old squires enjoyed his skilful personalities during the fiercer battles of ten years ago, but thought little, and cared less, about his intellectual fence so long as they were satisfied with his practical drift. But now has come a time when personalities are of less weight, even if they are not a hindrance, to a great party, and sound reasons are of more weight than ever; when cold

common sense tells more immediately than in any bygone time on the House of Commons; and when, therefore, Mr. Disraeli's showy gilding will not stand the acid test for gold. As Lord Stanley waxes in importance in the House, Mr. Disraeli cannot but wane. Both, indeed, are alike in one thing—the perfect and singular coldness of their intelligence. But Lord Stanley's intelligence is the cold sense of a man of business, which measures everything by a clear and visible standard; Mr. Disraeli's is the cold, superficial insight of a sprite, which throws a fitful, will-of-the-wisp-like gleam on everything, and is better content with producing a picturesque illusion than discovering a stupid truth.

There is an amusing German story by Musæus about a capricious gnome called Rübezahl, who haunts the Giant Mountains of Saxony, and who, wanting to gain an insight into earthly passions, and finding he could not do so without a body, experimented first in the form of a raven, and in that shape gazed at a beautiful princess, while bathing with her attendants in his domains, but

found his only dominant instinct was to peck at their legs or hide away their earrings. That story vividly reminds us of Mr. Disraeli's difficulties as an English politician. He seems to *wish* to gain an insight into English political feeling, and to have chosen a wrong organization for the purpose,—an organization which too often only tempts him to peck cleverly at their many vulnerable parts. It is a great misfortune for him that he belongs to the "Semitic" race. The "Semitic principle," as he calls it, has been an obstacle in his way through life, and it is the *only* principle which has. Race is probably the only thing in which he genuinely believes, and his belief in the Semitic race has widened for him the insulating and alienating influence of an adventurer's speculative position. He has almost as much difficulty in understanding how Englishmen really think and feel about politics as the German gnome turned raven had in discovering how men really felt about beauty. We do not mean that there is anything malignant about Mr. Disraeli. He is not a malicious political sprite, giving pain for the sake of giving pain;

whatever social nature he has is essentially kindly; but sympathy with others is forbidden him, and of course he uses freely the powers he has to achieve success, which, when achieved, he is too much of a stranger among us to use. He has great talents, but, like the awkward gnome, is liable to lose their advantage from the unfortunately external view which he is compelled to take of the moral world into which he has entered. In the fairy tale to which we have alluded, the gnome, if we remember right, creates a phantom court for his fair princess out of turnips, which he transforms into the likeness of her attendants, but which are doomed to wither away as the season returns at which turnips die down. Mr. Disraeli's politicians, alike in his novels and all his other writings, are somewhat of this type—very minutely like reality in the first superficial impression they make upon you, but soon proved to be nothing but a set of masks, temporary creatures of his own cold brain, as you come to study them closer. And though the same might be said of the characters of many a novelist, it could not be said of many a politician, as it can

of Mr. Disraeli, that these phantoms of his plausible fancy *impose upon himself;* and that, deceived by his own success in observing the superficial traits of men, he is quite unaware of the great currents of habit and motive beneath, which he has never explored and does not even dream of. His peers, his politicians, his Tapers and Tadpoles, his sporting men, his factory girls, his French cooks, and all the rest of his *dramatis personæ*, have one and all a superficial verisimilitude; but, after the first surface sketch, all becomes unreal, and his power of imagination is, in fact, so small, that he has never yet measured the difficulty of stirring any one class to thought or action. To this day he believes that the glittering epigrams with which he tickles the literary mind of Parliament are calculated to win real adherents as easily as they convert the heroes, and fascinate the phantom-electors, of his novels.

In fact, there never was a man less gifted with the true faculty of oratory than Mr. Disraeli. That faculty chiefly consists in what Mr. Gladstone so well describes in his book on Homer as the speaker's

power of "receiving from his audience in a vapour what he pours back upon them in a flood." Now Mr. Disraeli receives nothing from his audience in the form of vapour. His mind often reflects with happy brilliancy the surface traits of an individual personality, but he is almost incapable of catching the general tone and temper of a body or a class. Whatever oratory needs to make it pungent and attractive—the living picture, the novelty of colour, the graphic terseness, the sharp antithesis, the sting of irony, the power of climax—his best orations undoubtedly have; but the body and substance of all oratorical power, the talent of giving back to your audience their own thoughts, and feelings, and beliefs, in a form that fixes them even deeper in their own minds—the capacity which demands a real community of intellect and feeling between the speaker and those whom he addresses — of this largest part of an orator's power Mr. Disraeli is totally and singularly destitute. Nor does he even learn by experience. It is the peculiarity of his mind to generalize rapidly from single observations, but never to correct his generalizations, either

instinctively or consciously, when he has had a larger experience. There is no man who has discovered so many mares'-nests in history as Mr. Disraeli—the sort of generalizations which, when we remember them suddenly in solitude, make us laugh aloud to ourselves without even the stimulus of sympathy. When Mr. Disraeli brought in his India Bill No. 2 in 1858, with that wonderful provision (due, no doubt, to some such historical generalization of his own) directing that a certain number of the Indian Councillors should be elected by the political constituencies of five great commercial towns—Belfast, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham—Lord Palmerston said in the House that whenever a man met a friend in the street he found him in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and as soon as he was able to speak and explain himself, it was always found that he was laughing at India Bill No. 2. Well, that is how we laugh privately if something suddenly brings to mind one of Mr. Disraeli's favourite historical generalizations — say, for instance, the statement that Charles I., in breaking with his Parliament

on tonnage and poundage, became "the holocaust of direct taxation." No man ever had such a wonderful faculty for false generalizations, for constructing a wide and novel theory on the basis of a hundredth part of a fact — in short, for what used to be expressively called clever "viewiness." Now a "viewy" man is not a man to lead the Conservative party. We can only wonder he has been tolerated by them so long. Mr. Disraeli is a "stranger upon earth,"—assuredly at least on this part of it; and indeed his intellect is not one to find a home anywhere, is not so organized as to draw up its sap and nutriment through fixed roots at all. His literary impressions are quick, bright, and picturesque, like a stranger's impression of a new land. He notices much that few native intellects would notice, just because he is quite unable to take for granted what all native intellects would take for granted. His *assumptions* are not those of the English or any other people — the Semitic included. Probably there is nothing that we can strictly call moral assumption in Mr. Disraeli's mind at all. His intellect is like a cut flower

stuck in the earth, and yet, such as it is, it does not fade, though fed from no root.

And what is yet worse for his power as a politician, he is apparently quite unaware of his curious intellectual insulation from the soil in which he is supposed to grow. In the clever criticism of the late Sir Robert Peel, in his memoir of Lord George Bentinck, he observes:—"There are few things more remarkable in parliamentary history than the way in which Sir Robert Peel headed an Opposition for ten years without attempting to form the opinions of his friends, or instilling into them a single guiding principle." We think there is one thing much more remarkable, and that is the way in which Mr. Disraeli has headed an Opposition for more than ten years without ever ceasing from the attempt to form the opinions of his friends, and to instil into them guiding—well, we cannot say *principles*, but—"views," and yet without ever succeeding in doing so, or gaining anything but a rapidly declining reputation from the effort. Has he not tried to teach them, as he would have had Sir Robert Peel teach the Conser-

vatives of 1829, that the Tories should be the true friends of Parliamentary Reform? Has he not endeavoured to instil into them that the Tories should support the Pope and discourage all those movements in Europe which he calls acts of "sedition against the Semitic principle?" "The decline and disasters of modern communities," he observes, "have generally been relative to their degree of sedition against the Semitic principle," and hence his anti-Italian and pro-Austrian policy in 1859. "Austria would long ago have dissolved but for the Semitic principle," to wit, the Concordat, he explained to the wondering Parliament in 1852; and it is the same view precisely which he tried to express in the autumn of 1864 when concluding an alliance with the Bishop of Oxford as to the spiritual tribunal of appeal. He has never been really in favour of the "equivocal principle" of religious liberty, the unqualified application of which principle seems hardly consistent with that recognition of truth by the State to which we yet adhere, and without which it is highly probable that the Northern and Western races, after a

disturbing and rapidly degrading period of atheistic anarchy, may fatally recur to their old national idolatries, modified and mythically dressed up acccording to the spirit of the age." So he wrote in 1852, and this is one of the many "views" with which he has hopelessly attempted to imbue his followers since he succeeded to the leadership of the Tory party in the Lower House. Instead of "receiving from his party in vapour what he pours back upon them in a flood," he waters the Tory party with his own dreams, and hopes that they will suck it into their roots as sap. The Tory party, quite unconscious of such watering, continue what they were from the beginning of Creation.

Mr. Disraeli's rootlessness of character, as we have called it, probably contributes to his wit, though it shuts him off from the sources of true humour, and also from that sympathy which is the secret of moral discretion and taste. He is never at a loss for those sudden and superficial resemblances which have answered their purpose when they have flashed at once a subtle likeness and a

ridiculous contrast vividly on the mind, and he is more fertile at discovering them than any other speaker in the House. The House will not soon forget his happy phrase for Lord Palmerston's boastfulness towards Prussia: "the vein which used formerly to be known as the Cambyses vein;" or the likeness of Lord Shaftesbury to Gamaliel making broad his phylacteries; or even the gentle hit at Mr. Gladstone's financial moralities in the eulogy on "the somewhat sanctimonious eloquence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer." But of that sense of humour which protects from glaring absurdity he has none. All his early political life was one blaze of conceit and absurdity. Even as late as 1846, he likened Lord George Bentinck's suddenly-acquired power over the House of Commons to that of Alexander over Bucephalus, and probably to this day he secretly admires the gaudy rubbish of *Alroy* and *Contarini Fleming*. In this respect there is a curious resemblance between Mr. Disraeli and Sir E. B. Lytton. Neither of them know the mosaic gold of literature from the true. Both of them indulge in a "jewelly hæmorrhage

of words." With a striking talent for catching up a superficial knowledge of the world and its ways, both of them, though living in highly cultivated circles, have a depraved taste for flashy grandeur. "I never smoke," says one of Mr. Disraeli's heroes, in a serious rapture, to the father of the young lady he has fallen in love with,—"tobacco is the tomb of love!" Sir E. B. Lytton must often have grudged him, we are sure, that transcendental utterance.

And there is something of this ungenuine, this flashy manner, stamped on Mr. Disraeli's elocution in Parliament. It is difficult to hear him mouthing out his sentences with a sort of artificially weighty hesitation, like a ship pitching in a head sea, without a sense of hollowness that robs his choicest sentences of all effect. The wittiest points made in that tone give a sense of gewgaws. One thinks instinctively of the description in *Oliver Twist* of "Flash Toby Crackit," with his corkscrew ringlets, deploring the want of blacking on his boots when he had failed in the burglary at Shepperton. Mr. Disraeli is the flash Toby Crackit

of intellectual politics. Like an experienced cracksman, he has broken into the Conservative party, but is apt to think less of the booty than his own appearance. A more singular fact than his leadership of the country party has, short of absolute miracle, scarcely ever happened in history. But it is becoming every day evident that he *is* a foreign body in that torpid organization, and will some day soon be ejected from it in some unexpected part, as a needle that has been swallowed years ago will suddenly work out—not without pain, and gathering, and inflammation—in the fleshy part of the arm, or the leg, or even at the foot.

V.

LORD DERBY.

THERE are two stories, one of them old enough, and both of them, no doubt, pure myths, though founded, like all myths, on characteristic facts, which profess to sum up in an epigrammatic form the criticism of Lord Stanley on Lord Derby, and the counter-criticism of Lord Derby on Lord Stanley. Lord Stanley is said to have observed, "My father would be a very able man—if he knew anything;" and Lord Derby, when asked why he had not sent his translation of the *Iliad* to his son, is rumoured to have replied that he was waiting till it should be printed in prose, and published in the form of a blue-book. There is nothing very striking in

either story, except that they express both the family resemblance and the characteristic difference between the two men's characters even as politicians —the fundamental imperiousness of each,—Lord Stanley's supercilious appreciation of the graceful classical acquirements which too much take the place of solid political science in Lord Derby,—and Lord Derby's supercilious appreciation of the cold prosaic view of life taken by Lord Stanley. And no doubt Lord Derby's strength has, from the very first, been shown too exclusively on the ornamental side of politics, and consisted chiefly in his facility of thought, readiness in illustration, aptness in reply, elegance in style, and a certain imperious force of manner. With all these advantages, he has from the very commencement of his brilliant political career shown a profound incapacity for large and statesmanlike views of political principles —an incapacity which we should ascribe rather to a secret want of *interest* in the intellectual framework of politics, to a disposition, almost feminine —ill as that word assorts with his general character — to follow the tastes and impulses of the

moment instead of forming a clear and comprehensive judgment on the principle involved, than to any real deficiency of intellectual strength. Striking as is his son's want of political imagination, great as are the errors into which Lord Stanley's otherwise strong intellect falls from an inability to appreciate the strength of national feelings and the power of symbols over the multitude, we should say that he had almost more *true* political imagination than his father. Lord Derby has plenty of that illustrative fancy, and plenty, also, of that vivacity of sentiment which so much embellishes oratory, and which gives his speeches occasionally an air of imaginative force. But in the deeper sense of the word "imagination," the sense in which it expresses the power to hold up ideas in their full scope and meaning before the mind—that sense of the word in which we say that Burke had a great political imagination, or that Mr. Cobden had a powerful imagination for the rationale of commercial transactions, or that Lord Macaulay had a vivid imaginative insight into the forces at work in the production of political history

—in this sense we should say that Lord Derby has even less political imagination, though he has far more fancy and sentiment, with which to embellish his political preferences, than his son. Probably no politician of equal eminence ever understood so ill the real tendency of the principles for which from time to time he has fought.

And never having grasped strongly the principle of his cause, no sooner does he see its practical working than his fastidious tastes discover something to cavil at, and he goes into reaction and recoil. The term so happily applied to him—the Rupert of Debate—expresses not only his own fire and dash, but also his imprudence and want of large sagacity as a political general. Once committed to a charge, he has plenty of *vis* to carry him brilliantly through it; but he has shown little diligence and foresight in mastering beforehand the ground-plan of his field of battle, and absolutely none of that brooding intellectual power requisite for the conception of all large designs. With nothing but generous sympathies and fastidious personal tastes to give uniformity to his

policy, Lord Derby has been a hand-to-mouth politician.

Imperiousness in a man of Lord Derby's high position is, no doubt, a great oratorical advantage, but it has tended to confirm him in his intellectual indolence and his inclination to put far too much confidence in his own personal tastes and impulses. He had not been long in the House of Commons before he betrayed this weakness of political character, both on its exclusive and its generous side. One reads with some amusement, but with a clear sense of the dramatic appropriateness of the arrogant error to Lord Derby's character, that in 1826, on the third reading of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway Bill, Mr. E. G. S. Stanley "would undertake to show that the advantages of cheapness and rapidity which were expected from this bill would by no means result from it." "The House, he contended, were bound to interfere and prevent this mad and extravagant speculation from being carried into effect." It is clear that Mr. Stanley sympathized with the disgust at the scheme which many landowners—then totally unaware of the enormous

additional value it would give to their property—expressed, and that he opposed Mr. Huskisson, and what was at that time his own party in the House, on the strength of these keen prejudices. The feeling in the ascendant at any moment has too much supplied to him the place of a judgment, and the natural imperiousness of his nature has arrested all self-distrust. We should not of course go back to this characteristic of Lord Derby's youthful politics if it did not seem equally characteristic of his whole political course; of his vehement career as a reformer, while great abuses stared him in the face; of his generous anti-slavery policy; of his rash and violent personal collisions with Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Sheil; of his superficial treatment of the Irish Church question, and his wish to relieve the grievances of Catholics without infringing the privileges of Protestants; of his deepening Conservatism as the current of Liberal principles began to run stronger and deeper; of his gallantry in adhering to his obsolete Protectionist prejudices even when Sir Robert Peel abandoned them; of his pro-Austrian feeling when Austria was threatened by France and

Italy; of his pro-Southern feeling when the South was invaded by the North. In all stages of his career alike Lord Derby's political motives have consisted very much of strong class-impulses and fastidious personal tastes, to which it is impossible to find any consistent intellectual clue. His political influence has chiefly arisen from sharing strongly the tastes and prejudices of a class, while possessing a literary feeling too large and refined to admit of his expressing these prejudices in any gross or revolting way. A commonplace intellect and an imperious will, combined with more sensitive perceptions and cultivated tastes than most of his order possess, have enabled him to throw these prepossessions into an effective, chivalric form, that has given them a weight they seldom deserved.

And no nobleman of anything like Lord Derby's eminence has ever shown so little power of *learning* as he has done. His speech on assuming office in 1852, after the Free-trade controversy had been discussed and decided for six years, was a model of dense economical ignorance—almost of *incapacity* to think on such subjects at all. "When the

whole supply of any article," said Lord Derby, "is furnished from a foreign country, the whole amount of the duty imposed upon the import of that article falls necessarily upon the consumers in the shape of an increase of price; but when you impose a duty upon an article of which a portion is supplied at home, and of which a portion is supplied from abroad, then the measure of the duty is by no means the measure of the increase of price, but that increase of price is only in proportion to the amount of foreign produce which may be excluded by the imposition of any duty whatever; for, consequently, the supply is diminished, and thereby, to a certain extent, the price is enhanced." There is scarcely a proposition in that statement—made, let us remember, after the country had been riddled with economical science by the discussions of ten years—which is not erroneous. An import duty on exclusively foreign produce does not fall "necessarily" upon the consumers in the shape of increase of price; it is quite as likely to do so when a portion is supplied at home as when none is supplied at

home; and the increase of price is certainly not in proportion to the foreign produce excluded. Nor can anything be more absolutely false or scientifically absurd than Lord Derby's intended inference that the consumer sacrifices less in a protective duty than in a mere revenue duty. No statesman who could have believed this in 1852—and Lord Derby did believe it—can be in any appreciable degree capable of learning by experience.

Lord Derby's oratory depends chiefly, we think, on the patrician and imperious mould in which it is cast, together with its simplicity of form, for its great impressiveness. Masculine as his mind is in many respects, his style, no less than his policy, not unfrequently suggests that of an able and imperious woman. It may, indeed, well be one of the reasons of the great popularity of his oratory that his style is exceedingly diffuse, so that he gives his hearers a double or treble opportunity of catching almost all the principal points in every sentence. For example, if Lord Derby has to say that his Ministry would have gladly resigned if they had thought it right, he puts it thus:—"I

can assure your lordships that if we had considered our own ease and comfort—if we had considered anything but the imperative calls of duty—if we had not been prepared to sacrifice our private convenience to the public interest, there was not one of my colleagues who would not with me joyfully have accepted the alternative I have pointed out,—who would not have embraced with satisfaction the opportunity of relieving themselves from the cares, labours, and responsibilities of office, and who would not contentedly have withdrawn into the retirement of private life." And you cannot read twenty lines of any of Lord Derby's speeches without some such mighty cloud of smoke escaping to the heavens from the little casket in which its meaning and essence is imprisoned. But this is part of the power of popular oratory, though it tells rather on the hearing than the reading audience. Still we think it is in excess in Lord Derby, though it is tempered by the haughty tone which gives an interest to the roll of the sentence long after its drift has been clearly caught. There is something feminine in this ex-

cessive diffuseness. Indeed, we cannot help occasionally identifying his style and manner with that of the goddess to whom he has done most justice in his translation of Homer. Juno, as Lord Derby terms the imperious "Heré," is evidently his favourite heroine, and there is no one into whose genius he enters with so much spirit in his vigorous translation. There is a spirit and significance in his version of the passage wherein Heré beats Artemis about the ears with her own bow, that called up before us immediately the dressing Lord Derby gave to Lord John Russell in 1859, after that noble lord had carried the resolution on Reform which threw out the Tory administration. "To Reform," he said, "that noble lord is constitutionally attached, but attached less with the affection of a parent anxious for the prosperity and advancement of his offspring than with the jealous affection of a lover, ready to sacrifice everything to obtain the beloved object, but ready also to die rather than that object should receive any attention or owe either happiness or advancement to any other person. . . . . His indomitable per-

severance in the discharge of business, which has hardly found sufficient scope in the performance of official duties, is accompanied with a degree of restlessness under which he cannot be satisfied for a moment unless he is seeking to do some injury to the cause of those who are acting against him," &c. &c., with a long series of the most admirably planted taunts, almost feminine in their tact, and quite Junonian in their haughty asperity.

As Prime Minister, Lord Derby has been far too indolent to be successful. He did not keep Mr. Disraeli's fertile brain in check, and he did not inspire Lord Malmesbury with intelligence. Among some of the translations he printed a year or two ago, Lord Derby included a very bad one from Schiller's poetical rendering of Confucius. It was translated, we believe, when Mr. Stanley was but a youth, and must have been prophetic of his own political errors. Confucius wishes to say, according to Schiller, that counsellors should be slow men, and executive agents quick men:—

Nimm Du zögernde zum Rath,
Nicht zum Werkzeug deiner That;

which Lord Derby renders rather funnily,—

> Upon thy counsels bid attend
> (But not upon thy deeds) the slow.

We fear "the slow" have too much attended upon his own deeds, and "the fast" upon his counsels. It has been his misfortune to have a very fast politician for his chief counsellor, and a very slow politician for his chief executive diplomatist; and with a decidedly indolent master to check the intellect of the one and speed the intellect of the other, his Conservative administrations have not been remarkable either for wise counsels or strong deeds.

VI.

LORD STANLEY.

THERE is no abler man in the House of Commons in his own peculiar way than Lord Stanley. He is one of the most painstaking amongst the statesmen of the House, and also one of the most competent to turn painstaking to good account. No man commands more of that respect in the House which is yielded to shrewd judgment and careful information. The strongest statesmen listen to him for instruction, and even his party, by whom he is, on the whole, sincerely disliked, and with good reason (for Lord Stanley's cold understanding is rather repelled than attracted by the exigencies of party), listen to him with the sort of irritated

submission with which prejudice listens to the authoritative condemnation of worldly good sense. Yet Lord Stanley can never be a popular statesman; and if he should come to the top at all—for which his abilities clearly qualify him—it must be in some era like the present, in which no warm political feeling animates any party or any section of the country, and in which England is quite willing to be ruled by repellent good sense. There is a good sense which is essentially genial, as was Lord Palmerston's, and a good sense which is essentially depreciating, like Lord Stanley's. He is, like Iago, "nothing if not critical," and his criticisms almost always bring down your estimate of something of which you previously thought better. His last great speech to his constituents—delivered more than a year ago, late in 1864—was a frigid bid for power in the sense of submitting a programme in which Conservatives who do not care much for Conservatism, and Radicals who do not care much for Radicalism, might join. And within the last few weeks at Liverpool he has intimated pretty distinctly that no Conservatives of sense can

care very much for Conservatism, and that no Radicals of sense can care very much for Radicalism. Lord Stanley thinks the times ripe for a great neutral party that is not a party, that cares at least for no party principles.

The rule of Lord Stanley would be the rule of the strong commonplace essence of the nation,—the rule of the most sagacious element in the *Saturday Review*. Conservatism and Radicalism might, in a certain sense, really unite under Lord Stanley; for Conservatism would be gratified by the cold shoulder which he uniformly turns to imaginative or enthusiastic Liberalism; and Radicalism would be gratified by the cold shoulder which he uniformly turns to sentimental or traditional Conservatism. Lord Stanley is as incapable of refusing a common-sense reform from any fear of the abstract danger of change, as of joining in a demand for reform from any anticipation of Utopian benefits, or any chivalric devotion to abstract justice. Hence he is what the chemists would call a neutral or earthy base, with which either the suffocating carbonic acid of Conservatism or the destructive sulphuric acid of

Mr. Bright's Radicalism might form an enduring Ministerial salt. The only people who will never unite heartily under Lord Stanley are the imaginative people on either side of the House,—the people who believe in political sentiment as much at least as in political sense. Lord John Manners, we suspect, would never be able to endure Lord Stanley's forbidding nonchalance after following Lord Derby's gallant leadership; and Mr. Stansfeld, with his generous Italian sympathies, would frequently experience a political sensation which is the analogue of what is called having your teeth set on edge, when Lord Stanley gave expression to his cool indifference to the progress of liberty on the Continent.

And there are many other reasons why it is scarcely probable that Lord Stanley will succeed in reaching the head of a neutral or coalition administration. For, in the first place, the head of such an administration ought to be a man who makes up in great degree by the popularity of his manner and personal character for the absence of specific political colour in his views. This was, of course,

eminently the case with Lord Palmerston, who was not merely prudent in avoiding opportunities for attack, as Lord Stanley might be, but whose personal qualities supplied the English people with ideas sufficient in themselves to occupy them, and supplied the House of Commons with a real and sensibly efficient wish to keep him as their leader. The more modest the ideas and actions of a Government, the more important becomes the *personnel* of its leaders. If the measures of a Ministry are frigid and dull, the popular associations connected with the Minister should be so much the more interesting and lively. Lord Palmerston was for six years the head of a resting Government, which effected nothing of note but the Commercial Treaty with France, a treaty mainly due to Mr. Gladstone; and yet there was no popular sense of a void. He himself filled up the void in political interests. His liveliness, good humour, and personal adroitness, occupied the public imagination. The country did not feel inclined to grumble at the neutral character of a Ministry of which so popular a ruler was the head. Now Lord Stanley is peculiarly

deficient in this popular character. His name and rank are almost the only features about him likely to fascinate the public. He is coldly sensible. He is never likely to be a popular favourite, or a favourite leader in Parliament. Mr. Newdegate could never have said of Lord Stanley that he held out an encouraging hand to "rising" politicians —*i.e.*, such politicians as Mr. Newdegate. Every one respects his speeches, but they are chilling. While many Conservatives hate him cordially, the Liberals like him languidly. He is not the man to hold together a coalition Government by the mere force of personal attraction. He is apt to give the impression that he thinks with that Oxford gentleman that "there is nothing new, and nothing true, and no matter." That will never do as the moral cement for a party. Lord Palmerston's mind, which could, on occasion, put forth truisms with the emphasis of novel and important truths, was the one to interest the people in a tranquil policy.

Again, Lord Palmerston was peculiarly fitted for uniting men of different parties, because he

had a *national* reputation. The late Sir Robert Peel said very truly, even in the name of Conservatives, "We are all proud of him." Now this kind of national and international reputation is of immense value to a statesman who wishes to satisfy the nation while holding back from European affairs. When Lord Palmerston not merely decided to abstain from intervention in the Danish struggle, but did so after giving well-grounded hopes that he would intervene, the people in general were satisfied because it was Lord Palmerston. They knew what he had dared to do in times past, and took for granted he would not hold back without good reasons for which we ought to trust him. The mere fact that he stood at the head of affairs would prevent England from losing weight abroad, and with that they were content. Here, again, there would be a difficulty with Lord Stanley. There is no feeling that he represents the true British character. There is no confidence that he would wish to keep up the legitimate influence of England abroad. There is a general impression that he would like to "give up" colonies, and to

let the despotic Powers in Europe play what tricks they pleased without taking any notice. This would make people uneasy under him as the head of a mere administrative Government. He would have none of the prestige which would allay public fears lest we should be leaving undone much that we ought to do. In a word, we do not believe that Lord Stanley has any of the qualifications for standing in Lord Palmerston's place as the leader of men who belong to neither party, or to both parties, as you choose to consider it. He has probably the moderation and judgment, but neither the personal qualities nor the historic reputation which is needed for such a position.

Then if we compare him as a party leader with even very defective party leaders like his father, he will still be found wanting. His temper, though more completely under restraint, is scarcely so well suited either for discouraging the enemy or encouraging his own followers as his father's. Lord Derby's charge is dangerous, but it does not leave the rankling wound behind it that Lord Stanley leaves when his temper is simply "nasty," as it

not unfrequently is,—as it was not very long ago, for instance, to Lord Alfred Churchill on occasion of some debate on the West African Settlements, when Mr. Cardwell had to get up and rebuke Lord Stanley for his affronting manner. It is the difference between a keen sabre-wound and a heavy blow in the face. There is something animating in the former; and, as Lord Bacon says, "a man that is wounded in hot blood may best escape the dolours of death." There is something essentially inglorious in the latter; and also it is not at all in the same degree animating even to the followers of the leader who inflicts it. Lord Stanley's followers would, in some degree, fear him, and often feel the chill that would make their support cold or reluctant. And that is an unfortunate quality even for a coalition leader.

Perhaps the political root of what we have called the coldness and repelling quality of Lord Stanley's character is his strong tendency to individualism, by which we mean his jealousy of collective national action, and his strong *laissez-faire* leanings which draw him closer than any leading man of the day

to the old school of "philosophical" Radicalism. In the speech at King's Lynn to which we have alluded, he exposed very ably the mischievous importance which is sometimes assigned to the activity and energy of governments and legislatures, and stated his own belief that people are beginning to lean too much on political centres, and to forget that the chief life of the nation is altogether outside the forms of political organization. Every one who has studied Lord Stanley's speeches knows how strongly he inclines to the voluntary principle, not only in religious matters but even in educational matters. He is in this respect less in accordance with the tendencies of our own day than in any other. On "non-intervention" and the circle of ideas connected with it, on economical principles, competitive principles, commercial interests, administrative reforms, and the like, he is wholly in accord with the uppermost current of political tendency;—but the modern reaction in favour of a central expression of national feeling, in favour of that unity of action and comprehensiveness of plan which only a government can

secure — the modern consciousness of national integrity, as we may call it—is wholly alien to Lord Stanley. The molecular repulsions—to use a physical metaphor—should, in his conception of politics, hold the attraction of cohesion which constitutes a great nation in constant check; he is very jealous of giving to the nation lest he should drain the store of individual enterprise and energy, and as he allows little or nothing for imaginative influences in politics, he is incapable of conceiving that the very same concentration of national life which appears to merge individual efforts in State action, may yet so stimulate the vitality of the whole as to elicit even more of fresh individual strength than it absorbs.

Lord Stanley will be, as long as he lives, one of the ablest and strongest statesmen of the country, but we doubt if he can ever rule, unless possibly in a period of dead politics like the last two years. He is the essence of parliamentary good sense; he furnishes the mind of Parliament with its essential nutriment in a highly concentrated form, —a form always disagreeable, however, and often

indigestible; for human nature will not endure to live on beef-tea lozenges even though pounds of gelatin and fibrin have been boiled down to make them: but he will never lead in times when higher considerations than any which can be thrown into utilitarian formulæ are in the ascendant. We can conceive Lord Stanley abolishing the slave-trade squadron, and then, as the result, a passionate uprising of the English people to throw out the Minister who, to save the health and lives of a few English officers, had restored to prosperity the most iniquitous of traffics, and inspired Englishmen with disgust for English prudence, and shame for an apparent declension in the standard of English generosity and honour.

VII.

LORD CRANBORNE.

Amongst the few Conservatives of the younger generation who have shown marked ability and the capacity for something larger than Conservative timidities and Tory prejudices must be reckoned Lord Cranborne, the Member for Stamford, better known as Lord Robert Cecil, but now heir to the Marquisate of Salisbury. No Conservative made more rapid progress in parliamentary influence during the last Parliament than he, nor was it, on the whole, undeserved. He occupies a position as far removed from the mere business-like character and solid but limited capacities of such men as Mr. Gathorne

Hardy, as he does from the cosmopolitan ingenuities of Mr. Disraeli; and while possessing to a considerable extent the shrewdness and thorough culture of Lord Stanley, he is, what Lord Stanley is not, a genuine party man, and almost more of a Tory than of a Conservative. If he should remain long enough in the House of Commons, there is no man more likely to succeed Mr. Disraeli in the leadership of the Conservative party, or to lead it ably and vigorously, if at times imprudently, than Lord Cranborne.

One great secret of Lord Cranborne's influence is his unpleasant dexterity in turning a defensive into an offensive warfare. No man knows better than he the intellectual weakness of the grounds on which Conservatives usually defend ancient abuses, and no man is less inclined to defend traditional usages on the strength of those considerations which really endear them to Conservatives. On the contrary, he almost always makes a point of ignoring altogether reasons in favour of any restriction or abuse that is assailed; and, assuming that the existing state of the law is the *natural* one, which,

being in possession of the field, need not show a reason in its own favour, he sets himself to challenge the principles which are put forth by the invaders. It generally happens that in this way he can really hit the tender point of the Liberal position, and can show that their triumph will lead to consequences, either apparently or really, much wider and much more startling than the Liberals have admitted. Thus, for instance, on the bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister, Lord Cranborne even went so far as to admit that if the law were still to make, he should see no really sufficient reason for forbidding such marriages; but maintained that as the law does forbid them, as it is always undesirable to meddle with that second nature which legal enactments tend to engender, the true question to be answered is, *not* Why such marriages should be forbidden? but, Why is the repeal of the law desired and urged? And to this he replied that the motive for desiring its repeal was the wish to remove an additional restraint on the passions, and that the removal of this restraint would only be the signal for the effort to remove

other and more important restraints. That is the general type of Lord Cranborne's Conservative logic. He always carries the war into the enemy's country, and always does it with acrimonious ability. He declines to say what he himself believes, or why he believes it, but he exposes the tender points of his opponent's case. With cold surgical accuracy he "strikes his finger on the place, and says, 'Thou ailest here and there.'" His mind is far too cultivated for the sort of *ad captandum* appeals to Conservative prejudice which Mr. Gathorne Hardy gives out with such sincere and primitive fervour. And therefore, while Lord Cranborne commands less enthusiastic support from his own party, he secures far greater deference, and is regarded with far more fear by his opponents.

Nevertheless, his habit of always cross-examining his adversaries' case, and his incessant use of the *reductio ad absurdum*, are not entirely favourable to him either as a party leader or as an individual thinker. As a party leader he will find that something more is wanted than skill in arranging sallies and effecting diversions, which may be all very

well for weakening and disheartening the foe, but is not all that is needful for encouraging and animating his own forces. Men must believe in their own cause, as well as disbelieve in their adversaries' cause; and we know no parliamentary speaker who does so little to create confidence in the righteousness of his party's cause, or to restore faith in genuine Conservative traditions and principles, as Lord Cranborne. It is frequently easy enough to show your assailants' arguments to be imperfect, or to laugh at the extravagances to which their principle would lead, but by no means so easy to show that you are yourself in the right, that your views are founded upon a rock of principle that nothing can shake. Lord Cranborne never attempts it; and thereby he not only loses power as a party leader, but loses vigour and reality as an individual political thinker. A man who habitually asks himself, *not* What is the true ground of my own view? but, What is the weakness of my opponent's view? is in danger of absolutely not *knowing* his own positive belief. And this is the impression often

produced upon us by Lord Cranborne, and it is the secret of his intellectual inferiority to Lord Stanley. Lord Stanley cares little why anybody else is in the wrong, and devotes such power as he has to showing why his own view is true. Lord Cranborne almost always speaks as if his mind were fitted with a false bottom a good deal nearer the surface than the springs of his thought. His arguments, therefore, able as they are, ring hollow, as coming only from the superficial stratum of his critical vigilance, not from the deeper stratum of sincere convictions. Half conscious of the intellectual inadequacy of his party's dogmatic reasons for their creed, and yet inclined to believe that every other political creed is still less logically defensible, Lord Cranborne's speeches have always a cynical effect, as of a corroding acid which destroys what it touches and supplies no new element of organic life. If, for instance, he speaks on a religious test, he never even affects to prize it himself because it is a guarantee of faith or truth, but only points to the vulgar demand for it as a

reason for retaining it. Instead of denouncing latitudinarianism and the "misty" principles of the new thought, like some of his colleagues, he confines himself strictly to arguments which might be used just as well by a timid latitudinarian as by a Pharisee of the Pharisees. His speeches are always intended as solvents for the creed of his antagonists, never as antiseptics to preserve that of his friends.

And yet Lord Cranborne is more of a Tory at heart than of a mere Conservative. There are few men in the House in whom the anti-popular *grudge* goes deeper. Though he has the address of a Cecil in keeping in the background the deep prejudices which are too often the roots of the Tory creed, those prejudices crop out in the strongest form wherever there is no danger that they may weaken his case among educated men. The one class of questions on which he has been really rash is that of foreign policy. Both on the question of the American civil war, and on the question of the Dano-German war, there is no manner of doubt that he would gladly have committed his party to

a policy of intervention. It was with the greatest difficulty he was kept under by his more politic leaders in the crisis of both difficulties. Lord Cranborne then showed clearly, what is generally so difficult to find in his speeches, the strong current of positive prejudice. And though in both instances it was in fact a vehement prejudice against a popular and democratic revolution which he displayed, we doubt whether his strongest opponents did not prefer his speeches on these questions to the cold fence of his ecclesiastical Conservatism. He regarded the Northern or Free States of America as the representatives of the principle of popular equality and democracy, and he regarded Germany as the representative of the same principle in the war with Denmark, and concealed neither his bitter hostility to those Powers nor its cause. Yet there was a *verve* and animosity in his tone in both cases which was far more positive than his usual offensive-defensive attitude on those home questions where he is compelled to take the side of the stupid custom against the intellectual assaults on it. The real shame with which he regarded what he con-

sidered as the cowardly policy of England, inspired a respect even in his warmest adversaries which it is impossible to feel (except intellectually) for his adroit vivisections of Liberal reforms. In no politician did the caste-hatred for a democracy come out so strongly as in Lord Cranborne, yet it was so honest and manly as to secure him a new parliamentary influence. This strength of caste-feeling will be, however, his greatest danger as a Conservative leader. It may lead him into a policy of sentiment like Lord Derby's, rather than a policy of intellectual caution like the late Sir Robert Peel's. On home questions, where the whole case lies clearly before him, he may be a good tactician, though not an inspiriting Conservative chief. On foreign questions, where political instinct and feeling is stronger than reason, he will always be in danger of yielding to the force of his antipathies.

There is no better *debater* in the House than Lord Cranborne. He receives the arguments of his opponents on a hard and perfectly inelastic mental surface, so that they seem to drop down like dead

weights from the shield of his impassive scepticism. A perfect self-possession, a studiously commonplace tone in both speech and action—he stands well out on the floor of the House in an attitude of characteristic solidity, and with exactly as much composure as if he were talking to the Speaker on his own hearthrug, with his hands clasped behind him—an incredulous scornfulness, which is not *quite* a sneering manner, held always in readiness for interpolated explanations, a true man of the world's disposition to believe that, of alternative theories of his opponents' actions, the worse is always the more likely to be the true one, an adroitness in deducing homely inferences from admitted facts, a vigilant eye for the critical point of a discussion, and a keen party feeling, are qualities which make Lord Cranborne most telling and dangerous in reply. He has not, like Lord Stanley, a judicial intellect, for he is far too much imbued with party feeling and strong class-prejudices; but of all the men of his party, Lord Cranborne is probably the one who is best able to select—we will not say either the most telling, or the most ingenious—arguments (for

the stupider Conservatives are often more telling, and Mr. Disraeli is far more ingenious), but certainly the least *vulnerable* arguments against a proposed reform, though he is seldom effective in defence of the threatened abuse.

VIII.

LORD GRANVILLE.

During the outcry for administrative energy and ability which marked the second year of the Crimean war, Lord Granville had occasion, as head of the Ministry in the House of Lords, to deal with the subject in his own unruffled and conciliatory rather than commanding style. It was supposed, he said, and commonly stated on public platforms, that we had gone back about a hundred years in our history, that "the heads of the Gower, Howard, and Cavendish family sit in conclave and dictate to the Prime Minister the colleagues that he shall give himself. Now, my lords, I am a Gower, and I believe that I am the only one of that family who holds any

official appointment whatever. I am also a Cavendish; but I think that the noble duke at the head of that family has not shown himself slow to encourage genius wherever he has found it, even among the lower class of society. I find behind me the heir presumptive of that noble duke (the Earl of Burlington), who did not shrink at the University from competition with the ablest and best men of the day; nor has that noble lord abstained in his private capacity from aiding the public in many ways; but to this day he has never held one single office, and, as far as I remember, his only relation bearing the name of Cavendish is one who, under the superintendence of my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is fattening under the enormous emoluments of a clerkship in the Foreign Office. My lords, I am sorry to say that I am also related to some of the Howards;" and here Lord Granville said something suave of the late Earl of Carlisle, and then went on—"My lords, I had better make a clean breast of it at once, and I am obliged to admit that some of those who went before me had such quivers-full of daughters, who did not die old maids, that

I have relations upon this side of the House and I actually had the unparalleled misfortune to have no less than three cousins in the Protectionist Administration of my noble friend opposite. Notwithstanding all these hereditary infirmities, accidental circumstances having thrown me during my very short career more in the way of the middle classes, and having brought me into a position to appreciate more strongly their great qualities and virtues, I have been enabled to concur in their wishes and feelings, and to sympathize with them more than I believe the noble earl ever had an opportunity of doing." And Lord Granville went on to confide to his audience that the offer which had flattered him more than any other of his life, though in that case he had not been able to "concur" in the wishes of the middle class, was the chairmanship of the—as we conclude—North Western Railway, a post that had been filled by two members of the aristocracy and was then held "by one of the descendants of the Plantagenets." Of course the drift of this speech was to show that the aristocracy are far from insensible to the merits of the middle class, and

the middle class far from insensible to the merits of the aristocracy — to shed a healing balm over the bitter strife and angry popular uproar of that stormy session, and, by pouring the precious perfumes of aristocratic appreciation over the feet of the middle class, to dissipate their jealousy of the Prime Minister's supposed exclusiveness and restore their self-esteem.

We have quoted these fragments of autobiography from Lord Granville's speech on this occasion, because it is very characteristic both of his social and political position. There are few men in the House of Lords in whom a larger number of noble pedigrees touch each other than in Lord Granville, and yet no man who takes more pains to effect a close social contact in like manner with the various worlds of middle-class feeling. He is, as it were, to use a mathematical metaphor, an osculating plane to all the different shades of aristocratic and cultivated liberalism. His political nature is not a potent, but a pliant one, and naturally osculates among many varieties of the same view. The numerous alliances of the Leveson-Gower family seem to have expelled

the tendency to a strong and haughty individuality which usually haunts our greater families, and to have replaced it by a courtly sort of tact which delights in adapting itself to new natures and circumstances. Lord Granville's style of parliamentary oratory always reminds us of *swimming*, as Gray describes it in the ode to the towers of Lord Granville's old school, Eton. He "delights to cleave with pliant arm the glassy wave;" he avails himself of the floating power of the social element in which he finds himself, and gains all that he gains by pliancy and ease. He is not an orator; he does not, like Mr. Gladstone, "absorb from his audience in vapour what he pours back upon them in a flood," for Lord Granville was never so much the Liberal leader as the Liberal Master of the Ceremonies in the House of Lords. Where Lord Russell would bring an argument (or a prejudice) to bear upon his opponents, Lord Granville makes a conversational *hit*. He gets up Lord Derby's *Homer*, and quotes an apposite line concerning the Tory leader's wish "to fill his coffer with the spoils of war." He makes well that sort of speech which diffuses pleasant allusions, and which

administers the slight tonic of happy repartee. When, for instance, Lord Redesdale once complained of the unconstitutional presence of ladies in parts of the House of Lords not assigned to their use, and said it made the House of Lords look like a casino, and prevented members of the Opposition from speaking who felt the embarrassment of a feminine audience, Lord Granville was very happy in his criticism. He said he had once seen a French farce in which an English milord objected to ladies at dinner as an embarrassment, but that he had always supposed him a myth till Lord Redesdale realized the fancy; that all their lordships had not the advantage which his noble friend seemed to possess, by frequenting the casinos, of enjoying those views of the female sex of which his noble friend wished to deprive the House; but that he accepted with great pleasure his noble friend's satisfactory explanation why the Opposition speeches had been so much less effective than might have been expected. *That* is the sort of reply which brings out Lord Granville's forte. Politically speaking, he cannot strike hard—there is no political *vis* in him; but he is as easy and happy in his social points, as was

Lord Palmerston, without, however, Lord Palmerston's political ambition and masculine tenacity of purpose. Lord Palmerston's statesmanship was also of the old *salon* type, but in him the hardness of the man of the world was always the basis, and the charm of his jokes to the British public was in the fulness of his own enjoying power. There is neither of these elements in Lord Granville's socio-political tact. He hits adroitly and with all the polish and *savoir faire* of the French *salon*, but without any purpose that seems keener than the give-and-take of social competition, and with that lighter air of social pleasantry which pleases a circle, but does not put a nation in good humour.

Lord Granville has the art of diffusing a general complacency from the middle class up to the very throne. It is well known that there is no other Cabinet Minister who approaches so near the Continental suavity and pliancy of manner which smooth the way for the rendering of personal assistance by constitutional advisers to their Sovereign. There is a happy courtliness of manner in him which tempers ceremony with natural ease. He and his relative, the

present Duke of Devonshire, are alike Chancellors, though of different Universities, the former of that of London, the latter of Cambridge. And the more dignified office is filled by the stiffer man. Lord Granville exercises his authority "as Chancellor of this University to admit A. B. to the degree of Master of Arts" with the easy benignity of a courtly education, while the Duke of Devonshire displays something of the stiffness of a scholar and recluse. Lord Granville secretes that conciliatory oil which has nothing slippery or greasy about it. No doubt he is useful as a lubricating element for the hinges of the Cabinet. He is like the precious ointment which ran down Aaron's beard, even to the skirts of his clothing, in making "brethren to dwell together in unity." After the Russian war he was sent on an extraordinary mission to St. Petersburg to pour oil on the troubled waters; and he was eminently the sort of man for the duty.

As a politician he may be called a velvet Liberal—a Liberal, that is, who is liberal because his mind is supple and elastic with culture, and assumes the natural attitude towards every human ill that is not

inevitable, the effort to find an alleviation if not a remedy; but not liberal because he has any strong sympathy with political feelings of any sort, least of all, the passion of a people for liberty and power. He is just the sort of man for the part he now holds —President of the Privy Council of Education—the Vice-President in the Lower House having the larger half of the responsibility and toil. He also suited admirably the high offices he held in relation to both the International Exhibitions. A polished, conciliatory statesman, without crotchets, with ample tact, with a clear eye for the truth that knowledge is not only power but pleasantness, that, properly understood, there is honey in it as well as tonic, is just the Minister for those dignified and neutral posts which require no great originality, perhaps no superhuman energy, but cultivated intelligence, *savoir faire*, soothing activity, and a soft lambent flame of nice feeling. And such is Lord Granville, the courtly "ox-eyed" peer — to use an expressive Homeric epithet for which we have no equivalent, in a sense, however, somewhat different from that in which Homer uses it. For Lord Granville habitually re-

minds one of the stately benignant stalled ox of the old religious sacrifices. If England were still heathen, and wished to propitiate offended deities, the representative of the Leveson-Gowers, Cavendishes, and Howards, would be the kind of peer for a ceremonial sacrifice; and there would at once be majesty and meekness in his way of bearing the descent of the solemn sacrificial knife.

IX.

EARL GREY.

EARL GREY is one of the wasted forces of politics. A man who by all the traditions of party ought to have been a Whig leader—of great experience, for he is some sixty-four years of age, and has seen almost all the political changes of the long period since the peace—of large intellectual power and high character, and whose speeches on any momentous policy are uniformly looked to with expectation by men of all parties as certain to contribute some fresh element of value to their determination, he has yet, we believe, never been in office since 1852, and never done anything of weight as a Minister except that great transformation of our

principles of colonial government which was at once the only brilliant achievement of Lord John Russell's Ministry between 1846 and 1852, and one of the principal causes of its downfall. Vastly superior in pure intellectual power to Lord Russell, and succeeding to a name which had during the Reform agitation precedence even of that of Russell, it is curious and instructive to note how little, comparatively, the one man has mixed in the battles of his time, how much the other. Earl Grey has indeed been, first as Lord Howick, a subordinate,—then, as Lord Grey, with one great exception, a critic in the conflicts of his time, while Lord Russell has ever been a leader, if not foremost, second in the fray. The reason is, no doubt, in the characters of the two men. Lord Grey's intellectual power is, as we have said, of the kind called, in relation to the sciences, "pure," while Lord Russell's is very unquestionably of the mixed kind—the kind which could not exist or become visible at all if there were not great personal ends to win by its exercise, and great battles to be fought by its aid. A mind of less "pure" reflective power than Lord Russell's

scarcely exists among able politicians. If a true theory is made for him he scarcely cares to see that it is true, though he will use it with vigour if he sees that it can be made useful. Then, again, Lord Russell is a man with considerable popular instinct, a strong love of freedom at the bottom, and the sort of "short crust" of manner in expressing it, that brings it home with a slight electric shock to the minds of ordinary ten-pounders. He is never too intellectual in his view of politics, fully convinced that he is the true leader of his party, not very scrupulous in his fence if he is annoyed, and well able to deal a nasty blow to his assailant. In all this Lord Grey is almost the opposite of the great Whig chief. Gather up all the pure science of politics hitherto clearly established, at least in England; such as the truths of political economy, of religious toleration, of colonial self-government, and the *rationale* of the tie between the mother-country and the dependency,—digest them all into a clear code of principles; infuse into them something of a grudge *against* "popular" cries, not because they are popular perhaps, but because they

are so slipshod and full of exaggeration; animate the whole logical structure with a certain frigid aristocratic *hauteur* and inflexible severity of consistency, and you have the political mind of Earl Grey.

The one great political work of Earl Grey's life, which, as we said, at once distinguished and undermined the Ministry to which he belonged when he effected it, was no doubt the revolution in our colonial policy which he carried through during the Government which followed the last retirement of Sir Robert Peel from office. And there is no difficulty at all in accounting for the irritation which his wise, steadfast, and inflexible policy excited. Lord Grey, at the Colonial Office, was like a Whig *law of nature*. Everything he did was so coldly, so firmly, so irresistibly done, the way was prepared with such imperturbable precision, the refusal to take a single step backward was made with such calm severity of reason, the angry resolutions of irritated legislatures or deeply mortgaged sugar-planters were met with so dignified a politeness and so utterly immovable a will, the reasons for their

sufferings were explained with so admirable a lucidity, and the only resources—patience and submission—suggested to them with so cold a regret that more tangible alleviations were not forthcoming, that we do not wonder when we hear that almost all over the world wherever there is a British colony, *there* also are waters which, however profound their sleep, no angel could trouble so suddenly and so effectively as the mere mention of the name of Earl Grey. No doubt it added something to his unpopularity that, besides the fixity of his logical position, his personal tact in judging men, and probably also in influencing the men he had chosen, is not by any means great. We do not mean that Lord Grey's appointments were not good. Appointments made like his, utterly without favour, in the most impartial spirit of rigorously conscientious government, and solely on the strength of previous services or of wise convictions, could not but display a far larger number of successes than the appointments due to most other principles of Ministerial choice. But certainly he has not the instinct for dealing happily with subordinates, and probably not for judging rapidly of

their character. His method was too purely one of reason—applied reason—to secure hearty co-operation and prompt obedience. His criterion for men was too much of the same nature. The present governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey (no relation of Lord Grey's), received, we believe, no appointment at his hands; but we know from Lord Grey's speeches and despatches that that weak, time-serving, and incapable governor excited the warmest admiration in his mind, and received from him higher praise than probably any other colonial governor. The reason is very plain. Sir George Grey has the art of re-echoing, with slight variations of his own, all the opinions of his masters at the Colonial Office, and Lord Grey did not discriminate between this process and genuine independent convictions. He is too pure a reasoner himself to judge of others except through reason, and as between an able ruler and a shifty subordinate this is often a very misleading process. The "sciences called pure," as Mr. Carlyle terms them, are certainly defective on several sides as instruments of imperial rule. Still they are infinitely better than equally "pure" nesci-

ences, which are sometimes expected to do the same kind of work. Lord Grey's administration at the Colonial Office at least effected a more wholesome revolution than any Whig work since 1841. It extended indefinitely our free-trade policy by abolishing the differential duty on foreign sugars, and ruthlessly compelled our sugar colonies to adapt their cultivation to that necessity; and it established for the first time something like an intelligible principle with regard to the mutual relations of the Home and Colonial Governments. Lord Grey's inexorable logic convinced the colonies that we could not undertake the duty of founding and protecting them without compelling them to consider, within certain limits, imperial no less than colonial interests. When, for instance, the Australian settlers claimed that the revenue arising from the waste lands was absolutely as much their own as that arising from their own taxes, Lord Grey simply asked—from how *much* of the waste lands? Were the 4,000 settlers of Western Australia absolutely entitled to all the waste lands of Western Australia to the exclusion or detriment of future immigrants? Could the first

few families which settled in New Zealand claim to legislate on the waste land in a way to prejudice all their successors? And if not, was not the Imperial Government, in return for the protection it extended, bound to protect the interests of *future* settlers in the waste-land revenue no less than those of the present inhabitants? The colonists petitioned, chafed, set every influence to work at home, but "none of these things moved" the Colonial Secretary. He maintained the same inflexible attitude and the same haughty courtesy. "Whatever may be the censure in which the late Council may have thought fit to indulge towards myself," he wrote on one occasion, "I cannot be guilty of such injustice towards them. Amidst the deep satisfaction with which I have watched of late years the extraordinary progress of New South Wales in nearly all that constitutes the social and material welfare of a community, I have never ceased to appreciate the manner in which its legislature has contributed to that advance by the zealous and constant discharge of its duty to its constituents." That is not exactly "turning the other cheek," nor is it precisely the Sunday-school morality

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of "a kiss for a blow." The earl probably could not kiss—to say nothing of the difficulty of kissing a "late Council" at the antipodes; but to return a blow with a cold Whig smile is probably as near Christian morality and perfect dignity as a Whig earl could be expected to approach.

It is, perhaps, on the surface, a little odd that one who is so conspicuously and purely intellectual should have such a political reputation for crotchet. But what *is* crotchet except absolute immobility in a conviction to which the world has not yet attained, combined perhaps, as it is in Earl Grey, with a decided predisposition to suspect popular views of being wrong? Certainly Lord Grey's speeches before and during the Crimean war were chargeable with pertinacious eccentricity. Not merely did he hold, with several politicians who were by no means crotchety men, that the war was a mistake, that it was not the duty of England to uphold so slipshod, and in some respects so tyrannical a Power as the Ottoman, but he refused to see the true purpose of Russia, and insisted on interpreting all she said and did by the light of the

reasons she thrust into the foreground rather than by the light of the aggressive acts she kept in the background. Lord Grey's great speech in 1855 on the Vienna Peace Conferences is a conspicuous instance of the wilful blindness of an intellectual man to tolerably plain facts. He might—and if he had been wise he would—have confined his argument to urging that we had extorted concession *enough* out of Russia; that we had saved Turkey, which was no longer threatened; and that, with the death of the great Czar, a new spirit had come over the policy of Russia. But, instead of this, the popular outcry against Russia irritated Lord Grey so much that he made an elaborate apology for the whole of the conduct of Russia and an elaborate eulogy on the late Emperor Nicholas. Of course, he only succeeded, not in modifying our policy, but in making all men shrug their shoulders at the wasted capacity of Earl Grey. And that is the defect of his intellect, —the point at which his political reason ceases to be "pure." He loves even his own creed only while it has uphill battles to fight; his intellectual bias is against the common and popular cry, though his

liberal politics favour the policy of letting ignorance convince itself of its true nature by perfect freedom to blunder. Where Lord John Russell feels the impulse to go with the stream and write, for instance, a "Durham letter," Earl Grey feels the impulse to rebuke it, and enlighten it severely on its own benighted condition.

Lord Grey's style is the perfect image of his mind —colourless, pure, fluent, dignified, proud, lucid. It flows on, without breaks, from a rigorous exposition of principles to a clear application to facts. It is slightly didactic, and is never more effective than in taking to task. Lord Aberdeen's Ministry in 1853 came in before Lord Grey had completed the defence of his colonial policy, and it adopted almost immediately principles different from his own on the question of transportation to Australia,— different and more in consonance with the colonists' wishes. Lord Grey added a postscript to his book rebuking Lord John Russell (who was in the Ministry) for his assent to this change, and Lord John Russell must have felt almost as much put down as the many colonial governors previously

rebuked by the earl. But his style is too reserved, too frigid, for real didacticism. He wishes to teach, but he cannot endure that close contact with the mind of his pupils which is necessary for teaching. There is a "capillary repulsion" between Lord Grey's thought and that of the people who need his instruction. He teaches distantly. "Those who have ears to hear let them hear," is the undercurrent of feeling in his mind, which protects them from too familiar an illustration of the truths he has to impart.

X.

LORD WESTBURY.

Lord Westbury is a benignant being; yet his recent troubles have not attracted to him as much sympathy as they would to many a less defensible and less distinguished martyr. The truth is that his benignity has always been with him the superficial sheathing of unlimited intellectual arrogance, and that he has in fact trampled cruelly on the self-love of more and more dignified persons than any other statesman of modern times. Like Shelley's Urania in *Adonais*, Lord Westbury's intellectual tread has passed over the living feelings of his contemporaries; but though that tread has been soft and dainty in seeming, and though the moral pave-

ment over which it has travelled—the spiritual macadam of barristerial, judicial, baronial, ducal, and episcopal *amour propre*—has often been sharp and stony enough, yet we may safely assume that instead of "wounding the invisible palms of his tender feet" in the process, such drops of blood as may have marked his track have much oftener started from the sensitive pathway he has trodden than from the pilgrim's feet. Now and then he may have wounded himself by too blind a self-confidence, as he did a year or two ago when a ruling, supposed to be Lord Campbell's, was cited to him, the reasoning of which he took pains as usual to repudiate and contemn, though it unfortunately turned out to have been his own. But generally, being a man of unusually wide and lucid intellect, he has managed to pick his way over prostrate judges, earls, and bishops—especially the latter—who are naturally as pleasant to trample on as a velvet lawn, without laceration to himself, and with much anguish to them;—as when he cross-examined one unfortunate prelate, who had found his way into the wrong division-lobby, as if he were a witness of doubtful

character who ought to have been exposed; or, again, two sessions ago, when he drew tears of blood from the Bishop of Oxford by his criticism of the "saponaceous" Oxford declaration. "The words of his mouth were softer than butter, having war in his heart; his words were smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords"—so, no doubt, thought the Bishop in his pain; but he must have added to himself that the butter was very rancid, and the oil an unguent far from sweet. Indeed, Lord Westbury's extreme softness and almost plusquam-episcopal unction of manner is not exactly either the Oxford academical suavity, or the Christian Pharisee's soft answer which affects piety, or a tribute to the self-love of the world; but rather an act of justice to himself. "A good man is satisfied of himself," and Lord Westbury feels that a *great* man's habitual manner should have a serenity which no outward event can disturb. One might hastily imagine that if Mr. Bethell had exchanged careers with Mr. Wilberforce, the one might have become Bishop of Oxford and the other Lord Chancellor with little external difference to the planetary systems of which

these suns are the centres; but this would, we are persuaded, be a radically false conception of the two men's characters. The resemblance between them is very superficial. The unguent which anoints the manner of both, and runs down "even to the skirts of their clothing," is in them essentially different in purpose and in origin; in the Bishop it exudes to smooth the way, and lubricate the wheels of his chariot; in the Chancellor it was originally at least an act of homage to himself, a breaking of triumphal ointment and sweet odours over a conqueror, —an artistic expression of the beauty, *not* of his holiness, but of his greatness. "Fret not thyself," it seems to say, about inferior beings; seem not even to enjoy their discomfiture, but pass over their prostrate forms, indifferent alike to their blows and to their cries. There is, too, just a touch, just a trace, of irony in his air of deference and suavity. When Lord Westbury last session "humbly" moved for a committee to inquire into the Patent-office scandal, and accompanied his statement by saying that he was far from wishing their lordships to be satisfied with his account of what had occurred, his humility

was the humility of a Pope rather than of a penitent. Guilty or innocent, he felt there was as much irony in asking inferior creatures to examine into his conduct as if Gulliver had moved for such a committee in the Parliament of Lilliput. There was condescension in the very act.

Great lawyers are not often really great politicians. Law, in accustoming them to accept a system of premisses as their base of thought, unfits the judgment in a great degree for the power of *discussing* first principles, which is the true test of a politician's strength; and it is apt, too, to give them a contempt for the vague character of that sort of discussion. They are in possession, as lawyers, of a powerful machinery, by which a large class of questions may be solved; and they feel, when they enter the world of general principles, as helpless as a mathematician without his calculus in the region of general logic. Except Lord Lyndhurst, no great lawyer of modern times has made a considerable figure as a statesman, though, if he should choose to do so, it may possibly be reserved for Sir Hugh Cairns to merge the lawyer in the Minister. With Lord

Westbury we feel little doubt that this would be almost impossible. Wide and searching as his intellect is, it would be hardly possible for him to take that degree of interest in political *principles* which is necessary for a good hold on the eager political life of England. On all such political questions as merely involve a clear apprehension of legal principles and their better application to the existing state of things, he has made his power felt in both Houses of Parliament. Without him it is scarcely probable that the Divorce Act could have been carried; and with his help something like a real reform of Bankruptcy law may be possible. But in all these matters he is using a great scientific instrument in which he really believes. We do not say he believes in any principle at the *foundation* of jurisprudence, but he certainly believes in the possibility of extending and simplifying the principles of English law as he finds them, just as he believes in laws of language and the integral calculus. But when he comes to politics proper, and *therefore* unscientific, he is not able to suppress the air of condescension with which he enters into

matters so absolutely indifferent to him, for the sake of party ties. Lord Lyndhurst certainly felt the same indifference to political principles, but then party interests, *as* party interests, took a keen hold upon him. It was a deep pleasure to him to review, session after session, the Whig legislation, and show that it was naught. But Lord Westbury is scarcely capable of giving up to party "what was meant for mankind." He tried, but he failed; he does not really feel the interest of party. No doubt he was true to his party, as he was true to his family connexions; but he probably felt as much of a nepotist in conferring his help on one party rather than another in a question—say of foreign politics—as he did in conferring offices on his sons and his sons-in-law, his wife's brothers, and his nieces' husbands. In both cases he *conferred* something on those who were related to him by ties—whether called natural or political matters little—for no better reason than because they were so related; but then that is as good a reason as it is easy for Lord Westbury to give. Still this condescension to party ties could not supply the place of keen party interests. And

when the late Lord Chancellor assumed to interest himself in party politics, the sublimity of his real indifference took the form of a simulated solemnity. When he "prayed" earnestly to Heaven for the success of the Reform movement, every one no doubt felt that he did not care a button about the matter. It was too like Mr. Pecksniff's prayer: "Charity, my dear, when you give me my bed-candlestick to-night, remind me to pray for Mr. Jonas Chuzzlewit who has done me an injury." Not that Sir R. Bethell meant it hypocritically; but that, being obliged to deal with a party cry without any vestige of party feeling or individual conviction, he overdid the thing with his usually serene and imperturbable condescension. Lord Lyndhurst cared no more to prevent Reform on its own account than Lord Westbury cared to advance it on its own account; but then, when Lord Lyndhurst had once entered into the struggle, he felt the excitement of the contest—he felt, at least, as a chess-player feels, if he did not feel as a patriot feels. But Lord Westbury's soul "is like a star, and dwells apart;" he has to *assume* political humanity for the purposes of life,

and as a result he is not quite natural. Where Lord Lyndhurst would have struck hard at the foe, Lord Westbury patronized and prayed. He is not a hypocrite, but in all things which do not concern that science of which he has so strong a grasp, he is something of an actor, without an actor's genius. The arena of politics is essential for him, but lies as he thinks below him; and his imagination is scarcely adequate to teach him the reality of political feeling in most men's minds. He is without any keen sense of the *solidarité* so essential to that field of action. Hence, even had his legal career not been cut short, he would never, we think, with all his abilities, have reached even to Lord Lyndhurst's type of statesmanship.

Great experience of the genius of positive law usually leads either to a customary Conservatism like Lord Eldon's, or to profound scepticism, or to both. Lord Westbury impresses the world as a sceptic in spite of that famous lecture to the Young Men's Christian Association of Wolverhampton,—a sceptic who believes in "the gymnastics of the understanding," but little enough in the deeper assumptions on

which those gymnastics rely in order to get a purchase and a point of departure. When he suggested last session in the Natal trial that both the Bishops of Natal and of Cape Town—whose patents, by the way, we believe he himself drew—might yet prove to be the "baseless fabric of a vision," he alluded to a passage in *The Tempest*, which, as we conceive him, must have come home to his imagination as much as any in the whole range of literature. Prospero, of course, did not lisp— had not the Oxford suavity of manner, and probably no great knowledge of law—the qualities which chiefly make up Lord Westbury; and he was, we know, sick of the world, which Lord Westbury clearly is not. But if a purely imaginative subject could attract Lord Westbury at all, we fancy it would be this one of a great solitary mind using large powers in a dreary mental isolation to little purpose, and habitually contemplating the "unsubstantial pageant" as about to fade and leave not "a wrack behind." Such scepticism is far too real and too sad for Lord Westbury's usual mincing tone; but if ever he were to become real and sad, this is the sort of scepticism which would take hold of him.

XI.

LORD BROUGHAM.

THE great Patent-office scandal, in which Lord Brougham's name was so unjustly mixed up, will not leave any sort of stain upon his fame. But, by bringing him into close juxtaposition with Lord Westbury, it suggested a contrast which, for the sake of the characters of both these able men, was worth noticing. Both are middle-class men, liberals, law-reformers, men of great powers of mind, of inordinate vanity—men with a capacity to sting, and a disposition to exert it; neither of them probably in their different way scrupulous men; and yet what a strange contrast between them! Nor is it wholly a contrast due to the feverish period and the tranquil period of political life in which the

two respectively became famous. Had Mr. Bethell been by nature a politician, not merely such a one as Mr. Brougham, but of any kind, one to mingle eagerly in political strife for its own sake, he was not born too late to catch the infection of a feverish age. He was called to the Chancery bar in 1823, when Mr. Brougham was in the zenith of the popularity which the defence of Queen Caroline had gained for him. Mr. Bethell was comparatively obscure at the time of the Reform agitation, but his abilities were of a kind which, had they led him naturally into the political arena, must have made him an indispensable instrument to either party at that period, either the party which leaned on the energy of Lord Brougham, or the party which leaned on the sagacity of Lord Lyndhurst. But Mr. Bethell, as was noticed in a former essay, is not by nature a politician. He is not naturally a partisan. He is not naturally combative. Where he is merely supercilious, Lord Brougham would have charged home with what is called an "ugly rush." Where Lord Westbury drops vitriol with languid ease, Lord Brougham

would have rather bitten like an enraged camel. The dangerousness of Lord Brougham was the dangerousness of a malign force; the dangerousness of Lord Westbury is the dangerousness of a malign juice. Still this appears only a difference of personal temper such as you might find between any two men. There are deeper contrasts behind.

Lord Brougham was the hundred-handed Briareus of his party. There was nothing he did not touch; nothing he did not touch with some temporary effect. He has not exactly an *intellect* so much as a bundle of ingenious intelligences. His "prehensile" powers, as the physiologists call the powers of catching hold, are vast and numberless, but when he has caught hold of his subject he does not really make it his own. His intelligence was to the calm considerate intellect of such a man as Lord Lyndhurst, for example, what the spinal ganglia are to the brain—or a lot of little knots of active ideas to the calm reflective depths o tranquil judgment. His intellect in this respect is thoroughly *bourgeois;* not of course that intellect admits in itself of any artificial class distinc-

tions, but that the want of leisure in the middle-class tends to deprive it of that unity and clearness which repose and time to *settle*—time to let the lees of thought sink to the bottom—give to equally powerful intellects among the aristocracy. There are always signs of the mud stirred up by over-haste and imperfect fermentation in the proper *bourgeois* intellect. And all these symptoms are perceptible in the intellectual efforts of Lord Brougham. They are multifarious, scrappy, wanting in depth and thoroughness—the hand-to-mouth achievements of an energy more than proportioned to thought. Lord Brougham once said of Newton that 'all his investigations "were the easy and natural work of one great, simple mind, versatile in the direction of its efforts, but uniform in its mode of operation; *not the attempts of an ordinary intellect straining at universality by ambitious mimicry of different talents.*" Here Lord Brougham describes Newton's intellect graphically by contrast with his own. And in the legal sense Lord Brougham's powers offer a similar contrast to Lord Westbury's. Both very vain lawyers, Lord West-

bury's is the *still* vanity, Lord Brougham's the effervescing. Lord Westbury's intellect is not of the hasty type. He attempts much, but he limits himself to one sphere in which he can accomplish much. Lord Brougham, as we all know, writes on refraction, on the integral calculus, on natural theology, on chemistry, on the objects, advantages, and pleasures of science, on the eloquence of the ancients, on colonial policy, on the state of the nation, on education, on the statesmen of the time of George III., on numberless subjects, in fact, besides law, so that it was falsely said of him that if he had known a little law he would have known a little of everything. In fact, there is probably nothing of which he ever did know so much as of law, but then he knew too much of other things to be a deep lawyer. His mind has something cometary about it. A loose straggling tail of acquirements, like the comet's "hair," moving with brilliant display and great velocity over the sky a little in the rear of a small centre or head which dwindles to a point in comparison with its great train—such was the impression Lord

Brougham made on the generation which best knew him. A hundred-*handed* intellect with small head; a body of eccentric orbit; a spasmodic motive-power; a destructive sign in the political firmament;—such was Lord Brougham.

But, after all, the great question remains—Was Lord Brougham's ardent destructiveness and eagerness due to a genuine love of liberty, or was it rather due to the passion for *agitation*? It is not of course for human eyes to discriminate. But while we must admit that Lord Brougham's energy has had far greater results for the country than Lord Westbury's, we think it can scarcely be denied that the motives of both statesmen have been largely mixed with vanity of very different kinds. Lord Brougham's vanity is the vanity of an agitator—of a man who loves to feel the eyes of a crowd fixed upon him; Lord Westbury's, the vanity of an expert,—of a man who loves to feel that he can make his power felt over those who understand the game. What makes it seriously doubtful whether Lord Brougham's agitating philanthropy had a deep and noble root is the turn his views have

taken on his own great subject — the subject of slavery—when his cause ceased to be popular. There was no bitterer foe to the emancipation policy of the North of recent years than the great anti-slavery leader of 1833. His restless reforming instinct has always more or less measured its aim by the dramatic effect on the million, rather than by the cool judgment and high principles of individual research.

And being such as this—measuring himself thus by the admiration of the crowd, rather than by the knowledge of the select few—it follows also that Lord Brougham has been a Briareus indeed, but also a Goliath,—a Philistine incapable of the higher discrimination between force and power; a man whose spear was like a "weaver's beam," but who has had no influence in proportion to his strength. As he was without the supercilious precision of manner, so he is also destitute of the calm lucidity of intelligence which belongs to Lord Westbury. He is guilty at times of the most wonderful offences against taste and educated sense, as in a recent Social Science address, when he apostrophized the late Lord Lyndhurst as "Soul of the past, com-

panion of the dead!" Taste can scarcely be said to belong in any sense to such a bundle of intellectual shreds as Lord Brougham. His mind has straggled over such a surface, and dwelt so little anywhere, that *taste*, which is an intellectual sieve that separates carefully the coarser from the finer grains of experience, could not be his. But the sort of power he had was not inconsistent with this Philistine deficiency in judgment and taste. His eloquence consisted chiefly in a certain driving force; never pithy, but propagating a great living power through its anaconda folds, and capable of a great expressiveness in the direction of hate. Now and then, too, his imagination, though never spacious, was vivid in a gigantesque way, as when he spoke of Nelson, who had chased the French fleet to the West Indies and back again, as "driving it before him, from hemisphere to hemisphere, by the mere terror of his tremendous name."

Lord Brougham has described Lord Thurlow's manner on the bench in a way which shows, what no one who has watched him speak can doubt, that he has studied closely the minutest histrionic

effects of manner. He speaks of "the sarcastic and peremptory matter which eyes of the most fixed gloom, beneath eyebrows formed by nature to convey the abstract idea of a perfect frown, showed to be gathering or already collected." Again, he speaks of Lord Thurlow's manner of rising from the woolsack. "He rose slowly from his seat, he left the woolsack with deliberation, but he went not to the nearest place like ordinary chancellors, the sons of mortal men; he drew back by a pace or two, and standing as it were askance and partly behind the huge bale he had quitted for a season, he began to pour out, first in a growl, and then in a clear and louder roll, the matter which he had to deliver, and which for the most part consisted of some positive assertions, some personal vituperations, some sarcasms at classes, some sentences pronounced upon individuals as if they were standing before him for judgment, some vague, mysterious threats of things purposely not expressed, and abundant protestations of conscience and duty, in which they who keep the consciences of kings are somewhat apt to indulge." The description is vivid

and graphic, and is not without some touches which seem to show the school in which Lord Brougham has studied the art of impressing popular audiences,—for the arts which Lord Thurlow used to the House of Lords are by no means ill-adapted for less select assemblies. Lord Brougham's face scarcely indeed expresses the "abstract idea of a frown," though it is quite capable of expressing the abstract idea of a sneer, and you can see that he carefully calculates the oratorical power of his countenance, which is very great. During the pauses in which he gives his audience time to absorb the effect of his last blow, the muscles of his mobile face palpitate like a sea with the quiver of preparation for the next stroke, while his lifting and dropping eyelids and the nervous movements with which he seems to put out from his face a great feeler to test the disposition of his audience and their capacity for enjoying the next shock, really prepare them to appreciate it, and enhance the effect by inspiring a certain dread of the mischief which is hatching behind the scenes. Lord Brougham at such times seems to incarnate the

eager, threatening vibration of such popular feeling as was before the Reform Bill. And that is perhaps the nearest approximation to his character at which we can arrive. He has, we may say, the mind of a *crowd* rather than of an individual, — the same multitudinous capacity which a massing together of the powers of many ordinary persons would produce; the same *omnium gatherum* of utilitarian tastes; the same dangerous surging of fury against supposed or real oppression; and the same apathy to wrong when the momentary irritation has passed away. Lord Brougham once spoke of the Tory party, when it rejected Mr. Canning as its leader for Lord Castlereagh, as "having a devil." Applying the same idea to the non-electors of 1830, we may say that they too had a devil, and that the devil was Lord Brougham; — not by any means a Satanic devil; an ingenious and certainly a most useful devil—a devil which possessed the masses with many desirable and many fruitful impulses; but still a devil with plenty of "devil" in him— a devil towards whom the true attitude of feeling must be large fear as well as hope.

XII.

MR. STANSFELD.

It is always uncertain work forming an estimate of young and, comparatively speaking, untried statesmen. Even when men have gained a high place in public esteem by great and long-continued services, it is a matter of no little difficulty to discriminate the qualities which have aided, from the qualities which have impeded, their success; to lay our finger separately on the deficiencies which have lowered them in the opinion of the nation, on the characteristics which have retarded the acknowledgment but raised the eventual estimate of their statesmanship, and on the merits which have throughout their career deserved, as well as received, the public

approbation. Of course it is much more difficult to estimate promise than to estimate performance. As Goethe said of himself at a critical period of his life, "Whither we are going, who can tell? Scarcely can we remember whence we came." If it is difficult to discover whence political success *has* originated, it will certainly be far more difficult to discover whence such success *will* originate. Yet to understand our admitted statesmen thoroughly is politically useful mainly as a guide to the minor statesmen who are springing up. Those who, like Lord Russell or Lord Derby, have culminated long ago, can gain little even by understanding their own blunders; that which they are, they are. What would it profit Lord Malmesbury to see all his littleness in the most accurate of political mirrors? But even a less satisfactory criticism on a still ripening politician may be of more use than a far completer one on a statesman already past his prime. The task for which we have the fewest data and the largest probability of error, may prove the most useful after all.

Among the young generation of Liberals there are

probably few of more considerable promise than the Member for Halifax, Mr. Stansfeld. Short as has been his political experience—for his political life is measured by the last Parliament—we have had the advantage of seeing him, both in and out of office,—as an independent Liberal, a subordinate member of the Government, and again relieved of the pressure of official responsibility. This renders it easier to appreciate him than it is to appreciate some men of at least equal or even greater apparent ability who have only been seen in the one phase and not in both. Subordinate office is a measure rather of the elasticity and adaptability of a man's mind than of its general capacity. When a young man of promise accepts a minor office he goes under a parliamentary cloud; he submits to a discipline, merges his individual powers, and becomes a cipher that merely swells the importance of some more important figure in the Cabinet. From that moment you may have negative tests of his judgment, but scarcely positive. What he says and does, if he is wise, consists not to any great extent of words and acts of his own, but of reflections of words and acts

of his superior. He may indeed be snubbing and supercilious on his own account, like Mr. Layard, and then we have so much evidence against him. But if he take care to suppress himself under the superincumbent weight of his duties, like the Marquis of Hartington for example, then our only evidence in his favour is that he is *capable* of this accommodation to his position, of reflecting light without any attempt to be luminous on his own account—no doubt a great point in itself. With regard to a young English statesman, we want to know two things mainly—his intrinsic value, and his co-operative capacity; his originality and his receptiveness; what he can contribute to the common stock, and what he can receive from it; how much there is in him, and how well that much will *pack* with what there is of equal value in others. Of the former we can only judge when a man is free to speak for himself—either out of office or in high office. Of the latter we can judge better from his bearing in the lower offices of Government. There are several rising Liberals of great parliamentary capacity, some probably of larger calibre, whom we

know in the former of these aspects: few besides Mr. Stansfeld whom we know, and who has given so much promise, in both. We have little doubt, indeed, that Mr. Stansfeld's receptive powers will prove to be greater than his originating powers; yet it is no little political merit to be open to the ideas that are gaining on others; to be able to take your stand easily at another's point of view, and work out problems from it with as much fidelity as if it were your own. Of this elasticity of nature, of this capacity for gaining valuable experience from responsibility and the influence of others, Mr. Stansfeld has certainly proved himself possessed in no insignificant degree.

But receptiveness alone will not make a statesman. A man must have yielding clay in him to do anything great in political life; but he must also have some law of higher individuality which will protect him from becoming a mere "fortuitous concourse of official atoms," with no leaven of his own but the leaven of official manner. That is, indeed, no leaven at all—contains no fermenting power to make the substantial materials of official life either light or

wholesome, but leaves them heavy dough, such as we see in Mr. Frederick Peel. Mr. Stansfeld has a political individuality of his own, and one that is not without grace and attractiveness. His political mind was first moulded among the visionaries of Continental politics—a school which might conduce to a light-headed, hairbrained tone, with a mind not open to practical impressions, or to ineradicable democratic prejudice, with a mind of bitter and passionate prepossessions—but which has, we think, dropped some of its lofty idealism over Mr. Stansfeld without injuring him for practical English politics. We all know that Mr. Stansfeld's personal admiration for Mazzini has cost him office, yet it is by no means unlikely that his admiration for Mazzini may have been worth, at least as much to him as it has cost him. There is, indeed, no more vicious school in which a dogmatic politician could be educated than that of the Reds and exiles of the Continent—the long-haired gentlemen who are supposed to congregate round Leicester Square. You can see its mischievous effects in making and fevering dogmatic democrats in such men as the Member for Leicester, Mr. P. A. Taylor,

whose speeches have almost always in them the genuine *scream* of the demagogue. But Mr. Stansfeld's mind seems to be essentially urbane and also undogmatic, and is just one of the class which might be the better for being moulded in a school of *illuminati*, a school more *exalté* than any which will admit of practical adaptation to English life. The abstract political ideas of Mazzini have always been grand and disinterested; they have rested on a deep faith in men and in the providence of nations, though they have given rise to a narrow, false, and jaundiced criticism of practical statesmen in Italy and of the exigencies of the hour; but receptive minds like Mr. Stansfeld's can gain lofty and polished political ideas from association with this sanguine and logical red republicanism without being imbued with any aversion to the very different school of English statesmen. Moving into a different atmosphere, he has not failed to perceive something noble and worthy of assimilation there also, in spite of the contrasts to the dreamy ideal school in which he had graduated; and so he has reaped the imaginative advantage of the vague visions of the one school without being driven into

controversial injustice to the practical wisdom of the other. The weak side of practical English politics, as a school of thought, is a certain narrowness, a short-sighted utilitarianism, a confusion of detail, a vulgarity of compromise, which it needs either great political passions like Mr. Bright's, or scholastic tastes like the late Sir G. C. Lewis's, or a very subtle moral nature, like Mr. Gladstone's, or a very strong adherence to cold intellectual principle, like Lord Stanley's, to counteract. Look closely into Lord Palmerston's life-long hand-to-mouth politics, and you feel there was in spite of its strength and sagacity a want of ideal unity, of nobility of aim in the total effect. Consider the late Sir Robert Peel's habitual worship of expediency, and there is something even of intellectual vulgarity in the spectacle, in spite of the Minister's unquestionable administrative greatness. There is a want of high individual *tone* in the careers of both these great statesmen—a deficiency peculiarly characteristic of the English political atmosphere; and precisely the same might be said of a host of minor politicians. In minds of great calibre, like Mr. Gladstone's or Lord Stanley's, this pervading individual

tone may be given by strong individual characteristics. But in men of ordinary power, if they have studied in a purely English school, it will usually be wanting altogether; it will be stifled by the dust of perpetual detail, by the thick atmosphere of expediency and compromise. Mr. Stansfeld's first success in the House of Commons was due, we believe, to the impression produced by a high individual tone of political feeling. When, in his speech on the withdrawn Reform Bill of 1860, he told the Tories of the smile of triumph that had passed like a sunbeam down the close ranks of the Opposition as Lord Russell confessed the failure of his measure and asked leave to withdraw it, and warned them of the danger of indulging such exultation over the defeat of the mass of their fellow-countrymen, Mr. Stansfeld conveyed the impression of a high and courteous tone of sentiment, at once towards the class of working men on behalf of whom he was speaking, and towards his antagonists, which was somewhat new in the House of Commons. The former feeling of profound honour for, and almost delicate sympathy with, the working class had undoubtedly been strengthened if not

caught from the Continental politicians with whom Mr. Stansfeld has been so much identified. The Reds of the Continent have none of the half-patronizing, half-familiar, wholly disrespectful, way of treating their working-class allies which marks many of the English advanced Liberals. There is an air of high courtesy and genuine sentiment about the Mazzinian school of revolutionary republicanism which is absolutely driven out of our mind in England by the very sound of the word "Radicalism." And we think Mr. Stansfeld has gained much by importing this *tone* of feeling into English Liberalism.

On the other hand, he has gained more by combining with it that yieldingness of lucid sense which can enter into and appreciate the strength of an opponent's views. When he told the working class not long ago that no measure of reform was at present possible in England which the middle class would have any reason to *fear*, he took, without any compromise of principle, simply a statesman's view of the position; and in accepting the principle of the representation of minorities, should it be desired by

the middle class, he has shown his practical moderation. The same elasticity of mind marked him in office. His devotion to the drudgery of the Admiralty was visible to all men, and it was believed by those who knew best that he had taken the steps requisite for introducing a real simplification in the complicated accounts of the dockyards.

Probably Mr. Stansfeld's political danger is rather in too much, than too little, receptiveness of nature. He is the representative of a very different type of political feeling from the commercial Radicals, but he will do well, while marking the distinctions which separate him from the peace party, not to lose himself too much in the mere haze of official Liberalism. Keen sympathy with the popular national life of the Continent is a new feature among the advanced Liberals, and will distinguish Mr. Stansfeld no less from the mere "English-interests"-Liberalism of Lord Russell's foreign policy, than from the extreme non-intervention school of Mr. Bright's insular democracy. Mr. Stansfeld is probably in more danger of being merged in the train of the Ministerial Liberals, than of being

merged in the train of the great "tribune of the people." But if he maintains his political individuality against both influences, the nation will look forward to his career with hope.

XIII.

MR. GOSCHEN.

MR. GOSCHEN has one of those clear, reasonable, and entirely unsectarian intellects, at once "strong and supple," which are singularly well fitted for official life. Indeed, rumour says that he was originally destined for it, and only entered the great house from which he has now retired, owing to unforeseen circumstances which made his aid peculiarly desirable at the moment when his successful university career was ended. Certainly his official prospects have not suffered, but greatly profited, by this unintentional change in the course of his preparatory discipline. The end which was but "rough hewn" when Mr. Goschen was educated with a view to political life,

was "shaped" by the very change which for a time appeared to sacrifice that object. Had he not entered a great commercial house he would scarcely at his age have been returned at all, certainly not at the head of the poll, for the City of London; and though he might possibly have written on political economy (for even Oxford does not now neglect the "dismal science"), he would scarcely have written that terse and lucid treatise on certain economical perplexities dividing, as with a thorny hedge, the practical from the scientific view of foreign commerce and currency —the "Theory of Foreign Exchanges"—which only a Bank director and a man deeply engaged in foreign commerce would have been likely to study. We could name admirable scientific economists who never understood some of the causes affecting the rates of exchange with foreign nations, and scarcely perhaps the true reason of the frequently great difference in level between the rate of discount on the Continent and the rate of discount in London, till they were taught by Mr. Goschen's brief but graphic exposition. And it is obvious that the experience requisite for that exposition was gained in the

practical life to which his steps were fortunately for a time—and that, too, without delaying his parliamentary career, for even now he is only thirty-four —turned aside. We hold it peculiarly fortunate that the House of Commons, which is on such matters a somewhat puzzle-headed and blundering assembly, will now have in the Government a head so fully equal to the task of seconding and even aiding the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the exposition of topics on which it always prefers to listen to a man with a practical experience to guide him.

For Mr. Goschen has in a high degree the power, by no means a very common one even with men of lucid intellect, of lucid *exposition*. We hold the little essay to which we have just alluded to have shown more of the late Mr. Cobden's peculiar faculty for making dull and perplexed subjects plain and even interesting to common minds than any other economical treatise which has fallen in our way. The power of exposition really means logical tenacity in keeping hold of the exact phenomena to be unravelled and in rejecting all distracting issues, and also a certain keen perception of analogy in bringing

elucidating illustrations to bear on them. Mr. Goschen has the first and the most essential of the two powers in perhaps even greater force than Mr. Cobden himself, the second doubtless in a very much less degree. Still, for such an assembly as the House of Commons, his power of exposition is exceedingly well adapted, and though he would scarcely be able to expound the working of differential duties in the sort of way which once held a miscellaneous audience of thousands of persons in Drury Lane Theatre riveted in attention to Mr. Cobden, he will probably be no less instructive to honourable members, on subjects of even greater complexity, than was Mr. Cobden himself. Mr. Goschen will never, probably, attain the singularly popular power of exposition which distinguished the great man to whom, for one purpose only, we have compared him. If the dancing-master in "Dombey" had asked Mr. Cobden instead of Mr. Toots, "What will you do with your raw materials when they come into your ports in return for your drain of gold?" Mr. Cobden, if he chose, could have made that gentleman ashamed of his question in five minutes, and

Mr. Toots less ashamed of his answer, "Cook 'em," and better able to defend it, than he probably was. Mr. Goschen has no such power as this of making economical subjects as pleasant as a novel. His logical grasp of his subject is too unrelaxing to permit his mind to go freely in search of popular analogies; but on any subject, however recondite, on which the House of Commons wishes to understand him, we may be quite sure that he will make it understand him well.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that because Mr. Goschen has made a special study of economical and commercial subjects, and gained his first distinction in the House on allied subjects, he has really limited either his attention or his sympathies to what is generally regarded as the commercial view of politics. On the contrary, his speech in moving the Address two years ago, during the time of the Dano-German negotiations, proved conclusively that he stood at a great distance from the "Manchester school"—in truth, not the school of Manchester at all—of foreign policy; and the class of measures to which he has most earnestly devoted himself have

been quite as often measures conceived in the interest of religious liberty as measures connected with commercial progress. The peculiar qualification of Mr. Goschen for official life, of which we have spoken, is, we conceive, his entire freedom from sectarian crotchets of any kind. He has always shown a wish to effect all real improvements, a wish quite independent of their special origin, and a sincere objection to ineffectiveness of *all* kinds, no less than to ineffectiveness which originates in illiberal principles. There are Liberals who are so liberal that they care nothing about any change which is not likely to be resented and resisted by the Conservatives—who represent, in short, Liberalism militant. Now that is a very useful class of persons. Without pugnacious Liberalism, without minds almost absorbed in assailing old-established prejudices, the party of movement would probably come off but ill. But then that is scarcely the kind of mind for successful official life. If Lord Russell has failed comparatively as compared with Lord Palmerston in his later career, it is due in great measure to this sectarian imagination for reforms,

this preference of reforms that are generically Whig, to reforms that are purely administrative. So, again, if the free-trade party have lost ground in later years, and are now led by one who was a late convert to free-trade principles, it is from this want of intellectual suppleness, from this too sectarian imagination, this incapacity to care for any improvement which is not a mere corollary from their great reform. Such a state of mind is not the true state of mind for great official success. And it is the best omen for Mr. Goschen's that he has shown no trace of it. He was a strong and able supporter of Mr. Gladstone's Government Annuities Bill. On bankruptcy and partnership laws there has been no party cry; but Mr. Goschen has been earnest in his attention to them. He has spoken of England and her interests abroad like a politician of no petty school — no school but the English school. Indeed, he has taken a conspicuous position on only one party question, and that one for which his success at Oxford and his love for Oxford specially qualified him. His mind is in no sense *starched* by party creed. He

has the suppleness requisite for administrative success.

But, nevertheless, he has, so far, shown nothing of that too great pliancy in matters of principle which sometimes spoils a statesman while it makes an agreeable and adroit colleague. Of course in speaking of a politician so young as Mr. Goschen on a point of this kind, though there may be promise, there is no room for prophecy. He has, we suppose, as yet only been tried on the question of the Oxford Test Bill, but on that he stood firm. Had he acquiesced in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's wish to accept the Cambridge compromise, as it is called, which admits Dissenters to the highest degree, but excludes them from the ruling body of the University, Mr. Goschen might have easily carried his measure in both Houses of Parliament. His colleague, Mr. Dodson, seemed, if we may judge by his speech in the House, half inclined to accept that compromise; but Mr. Goschen saw that it would have amounted practically to the surrender for an indefinite time of the principle at issue, and would remedy a grievance by the sacrifice of a just right.

And very wisely, we think, on behalf both of the Oxford Liberals and of the Dissenters, he refused the compromise, and pledged the House of Commons, in spite of Mr. Gladstone's resistance, to the larger measure. His speech on the second reading was the ablest he has yet made in the House —a chain of closely reasoned thought such as it needed the close attention which it received to follow —a speech, indeed, which by the impression it produced both on his friends and his opponents, has done more than any other of his political successes to point him out to Lord Russell as a valuable ally.

Yet as a speaker, Mr. Goschen will probably be *less* distinguished than as a thinker and administrator. We have said that he has the invaluable power of lucid exposition, and we may add that he can lay down a great principle with strength and dignity, and with that accurate fit between language and thought which has an eloquence of its own. But he probably wants *play* of mind for the highest oratorical success. He has shown as yet little of that art of fetching an allusion from afar, of indicating that his mind is

ranging at ease among the topics most familiar to his audience, which rests the mind of a miscellaneous assembly without relaxing the speaker's control over it. Mr. Goschen's thought cuts a deep and narrow logical channel through his subject, instead of sparkling over it and around it with the grace of a playful imagination, or even striking sparks out of it by the shock of a strong imagination. He is nothing if not logical. But then his experience has as yet been small, and oratory of this higher kind requires a confidence which Mr. Goschen could scarcely yet have obtained. At present we can speak only of his promise, and Mr. Goschen promises to be a lucid thinker, a judicious and diligent administrator, a shrewd councillor, a keen and convincing speaker, and even a parliamentary speaker of a high though not the highest order. To this last character belongs a mind either versatile or intense in a degree of which Mr. Goschen has as yet shown no symptom. But Ministers rise every day to the highest eminence without it, and the calibre of Mr. Goschen's speaking is much above the average of the House of Commons. Moreover, Mr. Goschen clearly

has *vis* and an active ambition. Should he continue to combine the wiry fibre of resolute principle with that suppleness of intellect which office tends only too much to increase rather than to counteract, we may well hope that he has now begun a ministerial career which will steadily grow in honour as it lengthens.

XIV.

MR. W. E. FORSTER.

THE new Under Secretary for the Colonies is the best representative in the House of Commons of what we may call the *rugged* type of Liberalism—a type in many respects very different both from the smoothly logical and earnest intellectual Liberalism of such men as Mr. J. S. Mill or Mr. Goschen, and from the fiery democracy of Mr. Bright. The latter difference is the more remarkable because Mr. Forster's political education has been, in outward circumstance, exceedingly like Mr. Bright's. Like his it was moulded in succession by two potent social and ethical influences—an early Quaker culture and a northern manufacturer's life. But while

Mr. Bright's early teaching only served to make him feel with intense bitterness the antagonism between the powers that be and the perfect simplicity and equality at which the Society of Friends aimed,—and while he never seems to have embodied in his politics any of that width of philanthropic feeling which made the religion of George Fox, William Penn, and William Forster as much at home with kings as with peasants, neither more nor less,—Mr. W. E. Forster must have derived from his father's and mother's influence not a little of that valuable habit of mind which the Quakers have shown so often and so remarkably—more often and more remarkably than any other Christian society since the time of the Apostolic Church—the habit of *leavening* a society with which they do not in the least agree with principles higher than its own, and often without appearing to combat directly anything in its existing creed. The more celebrated Quakers have always had this power, and always had it under the form of a certain ruggedness of outward simplicity, which in one case — that of George Fox's leathern dress—made so strong an

impression on the imagination of Mr. Carlyle that he has described the making of that leather suit as an era in history. The new Under Secretary for the Colonies has not, apparently, retained any of the peculiarity of his childhood's faith, except this rugged simplicity of manner which, without having the eccentricity of a leather suit, seems to have the same sort of power to give him easy access to the most different strata of political feeling—to the mind of such Tories as Lord Cranborne, in close conversation with whom he may often be seen seated in the House, and of such Radicals as the working men of Bradford, whom he breasts with precisely the same sort of political growl when he does not agree with them, as he would the Tory Opposition. Indeed this rough simplicity and sincerity of manner gives Mr. Forster much of his peculiar influence. It makes genuine politicians, of whatever school or section of society, at home with him at once because they feel that there are no "common forms," as the lawyers say, covering and partially concealing the region of genuine political convictions. But then of course this is not due to the simplicity and

ruggedness alone, it is due to the real respect for the opinions of others which these qualities happen in this case to express—to the manly roughness that, *because* it wants to get at the bottom of others' minds, is seen to be speaking straight from the bottom of its own. Both Mr. Bright and Mr. Forster are rugged politicians, and occasionally give formidable growls at their opponents. But the growl is a very different thing in the two men. With the former it is scorn warning you off: with the latter the protest under cover of which you know that your view has gained its lodgment and will be fairly considered. From Mr. Bright's growl, as the expression of his whole mind, you recoil. From Mr. Forster's you gain courage, as you do when a mastiff's voice sinks into a rumble of dissatisfaction, and you know at once that he sees cause, though reluctantly, to reconsider judgment. The invaluable habit of mind which can respectfully recognize an opinion wherever found as *de facto* power, even while suggesting something which may radically modify if not subvert it, has always belonged to the true non-resistance schools of religious thought and philanthropy, and

to none more than the late William Forster, who succeeded in gaining the ear even of slave-owners for doctrines essentially subversive of slavery. Mr. W. E. Forster has no doubt inherited it, and his possession of it constitutes his chief political advantage over Mr. Bright, who always makes his opponents feel that he condemns if he does not scorn them for their belief.

There is no political point, for instance, on which this difference comes out more decisively than in the way in which the two Radicals have always treated the question of the representation of minorities. Mr. Bright rejoices, almost vehemently, in the thought that the mass of men can trample under foot the wishes of the select few when opposed to those of the many. Mr. Forster, keen Radical as he is, has frankly confessed to working men that he thought the representation of the opinions of minorities right in principle, and that any scheme for effecting it without compromising the equality of different classes, deserves consideration. Precisely the same difference may be seen in the different way in which the two men treat *national*

feelings—Mr. Bright never hesitating to wound, Mr. Forster uniformly respecting them. Throughout the American war Mr. Forster always gained attention for his pro-Northern speeches by the studiously English character which he took care—or, rather, which it was in his nature—to give them. Mr. Bright, on the contrary, openly enjoyed the implied slur on English institutions which his eloquent eulogies on the conduct of Northern affairs by the great republic carried, and were meant to carry, with them. Mr. Bright did not hesitate to say "Perish Savoy!" rather than that England should go to war with France, and in speaking of a war for Denmark he lavished ridicule and contempt on the bare idea. Mr. Forster was keenly opposed on principle to that war, but he took pains to express his real admiration for the heroism of that little State, and was solicitous to distinguish between his sympathy with the German national indignation against the wrong done by Denmark to the Germans of Schleswig, and his anger at the double part played by Prussia and Austria. Mr. Bright gains the *ear* of the House by his eloquence

and the force of his character, but never gains its sympathy for his point of view, because he feels no respect himself for the point of view of his audience; but Mr. Forster gains both its ear and its sympathy for his view, even when he has least success in gaining the approval of its matured judgment.

And there is the same difference of *nuance* in the deposit left by their childhoods' Quakerism in the personal politics of the two men as there is in their attitude towards the convictions of others. Both men are essentially anti-aristocratic; but while Mr. Bright's imagination is full of the social aristocracy he hates, Mr. Forster's is full of the working classes he loves. Neither likes ecclesiastical privilege, but while Mr. Bright inveighs against the Establishment, Mr. Forster strikes a blow for the Dissenters. Both detest slavery, but while Mr. Bright launches splendid invective against the slave-owners, Mr. Forster pleads earnestly for the slaves. As manufacturers, too, the difference reappears. Mr. Bright, though the most radical of Radicals in politics, has always sided with his own class, the capitalists, as against the operatives on

questions of economy, his antipathy to the aristocracy not arising from sympathy with working men. Mr. Bright was, for instance, a strong opponent of the Ten Hours' Bill—the one great measure passed in our generation for the working man; nor has he ever appeared as mediator between the combinations of masters and the combinations of men. Mr. Forster is known in the North as the one capitalist who has always been more than impartial to the claims of the operatives, and not long ago sat on a committee which reported most fairly and favourably to the general action of trades' unions. Of course in thus comparing the two men, we do not mean to imply that we rank Mr. Forster in eloquence at all near to Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright is perhaps the only speaker of this day whose speeches will be read for their *mere* greatness as speeches for generations to come, while Mr. Forster is only one of the most promising among the score or so of able men who make the house listen and reflect, but never excite it. Yet, on that very account, it is worth noting that of these two men, who "seem to be pillars" among the small party of Northern Radicals,

the more brilliant man is a man of antipathies and negative politics, while the other is a man of sympathies and positive politics; the truth probably being that Quakerism took a strong enough hold of Mr. Bright to inspire him with a belief that all the rest of the world is wrong, without quite convincing him that its own principles are right; while in its effect on the mind of the younger politician it was always combined with the social antidotes of a larger culture and of more catholic sympathies, which prevented him from borrowing more than a few of its nobler principles, and from being driven by it into reaction against the world.

As Under Secretary for the Colonies, Mr. Forster will have to be on his guard against some of the prepossessions of his philanthropic traditions. He succeeds in Mr. Chichester Fortescue a man of less influence, no doubt, as a mere speaker, but one of very strong sense and judgment, who did something to balance the thin anti-colonist prejudices of Mr. Cardwell. On New Zealand questions, for instance, Mr. Chichester Fortescue certainly knew much more, and took a far sounder view of the true position of

the colony, than his chief; while Mr. Forster, naturally enough with his antecedents, has thrown his influence every now and then into the same scale with the so-called native party—more truly the episcopal party—in those islands. It is good to have a keen sense of both justice and humanity in our colonial officials; for, from time to time, control, sometimes sharp control, over colonial self-interest, especially in places where the native population almost outnumbers the English, is imperatively needed. But what is needed quite as much is a strong sympathy with the feelings and a clear insight into the position of the settlers, so as to apply the pressure only when needful, and even then without Lord Grey's unfortunate art of making every despatch a blister to colonial pride. Mr. Forster, as Colonial Under Secretary, will doubtless have the judgment to keep his warm and hereditary philanthropy for depressed races under the control of his strong judgment, and never permit it to influence him till he has considered matters also from the colonial point of view. His sympathies are quite wide enough for the double process. Indeed it is

the strongest point, as we have already said, in his political character that he respects sincerely the honest convictions which he most dislikes, so that there is constant chemical action, as we may say, going on in his politics, a reciprocal flow of influences between the opinions he opposes and the opinions he defends. It is this, in fact, which gives what we have called the ruggedness to his Liberalism. It is not all of a piece, like the seamless Liberalism of Mr. Goschen or the pure democracy of Mr. Bright. It is the result of a cross-fire of tendencies, which keep up a perpetually modifying influence upon his mode of presenting his thoughts, and give him his parliamentary tact. And we may well trust to the same candour to admit a like intellectual friction between his own prepossessions on colonial affairs, and the opposite views of the settlers with whom he will have to deal.

XV.

MR. BRIGHT.

Mr. Bright's political friends are, for a different reason, guilty of as great a mistake in wishing to see him in the Cabinet, as were the Duke of Wellington's in wishing to see him at the head of the Government. When a man has discharged a solitary function in the history of his time so as to command the admiration of mankind, it is a pitiable thing to tempt him to dwindle into a part in itself perhaps great, but one in which he will never seem so—one which will be marred by incongruous associations floating round all his words and deeds. Mr. Bright is a grand figure in the history of the last quarter of a century,—a figure almost as unique in

politics as an active volcano in a quiet and tranquil country of wooded slopes and sunny uplands. Unlike the agitators of former days, who only gave vent to a wrath with the suppressed vibrations of which the whole earth around them was trembling, Mr. Bright has sent up cloud after cloud of ashes left by the political combustion of past eras, flash after flash of living democratic fire, stream after stream of boiling denunciation for aristocratic institutions, without any visible connection with the agitated social strata whence such eruptions usually flow. Perhaps we might suppose that, as in other such cases, the volcanic force was in subterranean and submarine connection with the revolutionary feeling of Poland or France, were it not notorious that, so far as it depends upon them at all, it is fed, not by sympathy with, but by antipathy to, these movements. It shows more connection indeed with Transatlantic than European phenomena, and perhaps it is due only to the solitary character of the outlet, that disturbing forces which seem so mild and governable in America should be so fiery and subversive here. But account for it as we may, it

has been Mr. Bright's picturesque characteristic as a politician to concentrate in our own tranquil times mere popular dissatisfaction into stinging irony and magnificent scorn; nay, as far as we can see, to burn with even more splendid and eloquent wrath against the aristocracy after they had ceased to oppose the most pressing of popular reforms than he did while yet the corn laws were the legitimate fuel for the fire of his revolutionary passion. Mr. Bright in the Cabinet would both extinguish and be extinguished. He would cause the downfall of his companions, and he would no longer present the unique and solitary historic form which has made him a splendid if often mischievous agency in our political world. If a revolutionary Government should ever be formed in England, Mr. Bright might take the reins, and by the grandeur of his revolutionary moderation gain new fame as an English Gracchus or Rienzi. But Mr. Bright meekly carrying out the policy of Sir Charles Wood, Mr. Bright rising to vindicate his noble friend the Duke of Somerset from the imputations of the Opposition, would surely awaken that sense of the incongruous and the ridi-

culous which is more fatal to a great man's fame than even a political crime the motive of which is in keeping with his previous career. There would have been nothing of this incongruity, were Mr. Cobden living, in *his* moderating his views to suit the temper of a Liberal Administration, for Mr. Cobden represented the lucid intelligence, the political ingenuity, the rational acuteness of his party, while Mr. Bright represents its passion and imagination. There is nothing incongruous in intelligence, even though holding to its own convictions, yielding something for the sake of compromise, and biding its time. But for the passionate resentment of wronged and suffering patriotism to unsay its burning words—for the visionary imagination of the democratic prophet to surrender its dream of a millennium, take back its anathemas, and at the request of defied and defiant adversaries, give up its independence,—could not but be a fatal indecorum. It would have been almost as fitting for Tiberius Gracchus to have accepted as a colleague the Octavius whom he had persuaded the people to depose, or for Rienzi to have combined with Colonna, as

for Mr. Bright to lay aside the scathing lightning of his democratic invective and coalesce with the aristocracy against whom he has denounced so many woes.

It is Mr. Bright's most striking characteristic as a politician that with little more than the bald and negative political creed of a schoolboy Radical —a creed of two articles, one expressing abstract belief in the majesty of the people, and one expressing living scorn for the arbitrary conventions which assign so much influence to a class favoured only by the "accident of birth"—he combines so much wealth of feeling, so much splendour of imagination, so much exquisite literary discrimination. Usually a man—at least a mature man—who wishes to break with history, shows a cold imagination and a naked literary taste. But Mr. Bright, who speaks of the principle of our foreign policy for centuries as a "foul idol" deluged with the blood of human victims—who describes the provision made for our military and naval services as resembling the Scythian sacrifices to the old scimitar which was hung up as the symbol of Mars—who never delivers a

great speech without pouring the vials of his wrath over the House of Lords, one day declaring that the British army is a "gigantic system of out-door relief" for the aristocracy of this country, or that the nobles of 1688 have ever since followed their prey like "the jackals of the desert," another day lamenting that "not the smallest modicum of freedom or justice can come to the people till it has gone through *the very fine meshes of the net* of the House of Lords"—who cannot allude to the national Church without indignant disgust, speaking of a bishop as "that creature of monstrous, nay, even of adulterous birth, the spiritual peer,"—Mr. Bright, who thus seems to loathe the oppressive heritage of the ages because it has denied so much to plebeian genius and stored up so much for patrician incapacity, has yet always shown, even in his curses, a delicate literary feeling for his subject which has given weight to his destructive rage, and splendour even to his maledictions.

Mr. Bright has, we suspect, been injured as a politician by his early Quakerism. The exaggerated horror of all deference for human authority—the

conventional hatred of conventionalities—the unnatural, because impossible, effort to weigh everything habitually at its true spiritual value without regard to its actually social estimation—the non-resistance creed, so fascinating to an aggressive mind like Mr. Bright's, because, instead of plunging him into contests here and there, it sets him to battle against the world — the pacific passion for commerce—and the radical feud with history,—all of which Quakerism has ever endeavoured to implant in its converts, early engaged Mr. Bright's nature much more strongly than the ecclesiastical crotchet which constitutes its creed, and left no proper work for his fine imagination, except to impeach those political institutions which seemed to him to foster most the conventional falsehoods thus condemned by his early faith. There is nothing worse for a man of Mr. Bright's power of mind than to be educated in a sort of moral pique against Providence, and yet to see, or think he sees, a state of society in one special quarter of the world which seems to show that the abstract ideal at the foundation of his original belief is not quite a dream. In a mind so

powerful as Mr. Bright's, the mere vision of a republic would have produced little effect, had he not had what seemed like a real knowledge of a nation apparently without traditions to thwart reason, without ranks to break up the natural equality of man, without centralization to absorb the individual citizen in the common government, and at one time almost without war or the fear of war, devoting itself to commerce and domestic pursuits, and seeming to aspire to little beyond. This sight, as he has seen it, has probably helped him to believe that all history, except that of the United States, has been a tissue of crime and blunder which resolute democracy may yet root out, and has confirmed him in his moods of almost Shelleyan invective against the tyranny of the past. The ethics and politics of Quakerism have a sort of bald simplicity about them which, once having fascinated a strong nature, necessarily drives all the higher faculties of the mind into resistance and aggression, instead of engaging them to enter by sympathy into the human nature that history has formed, and to appreciate with fine discrimination the merits and

blemishes of institutions ripened or decayed by time.

Mr. Bright's political creed is, then, crude and bald and forgetful of the past. Yet his wonderful command of pure and rich language, and the delicate shades of his expression in supporting that creed, show an insight into thoughts inconsistent with it, and almost prove that the tenacity of his prejudices has kept his imagination at arm's reach, and used it as a mere resource for giving external brilliance to his thought, without altering its essence. If any one noticed only Mr. Bright's exquisite taste in using the Saxon and the Latin elements of our language, he would argue that no speaker in the country was more likely to understand the relative value of homely truths and grand associations. Mr. Bright knows as well as any man that the Saxon basis of our language, strong, homely, and all important as it is, cannot quite dispense with the aid of the engrafted Latin elements, and no great orator ever used the latter with such happy and skilful discrimination. A critical eye can scarcely read a single speech of his without being struck by this.

Take, as the briefest illustration we can give, the conclusion of that great speech in which he anticipated the time when "England, the *august* mother of free nations, shall herself be free." Mr. Bright, judged by his political creed alone, had scarcely a right to that term "august." It suggests naturally a cloud of associations which he would regard as constituting not her glory, but her shame. But Mr. Bright's imagination has modified his language, though not his creed, and while he tries to think away all imperial hopes and memories, their echoes linger in his ear. His *style* of invective, too, shows the same conflict of deep inward forces as his mere language. No one feels more strongly than Mr. Bright—we may say, no one resents so strongly—the actual power and authority of those historical precedents and that social prestige with which he wages internecine war, and hence no doubt the keen and effective irony which runs through his greatest speeches like a shooting pain. In all irony the meaning most opposite, most antithetical to the real thought, is suggested to the mind, but suggested only to be shamefully exposed. Thus, when Mr.

Bright repelled the accusation that he had depreciated the aristocracy of this country, in the words, "Who that knows me would believe that I ever engaged in a work of supererogation so absurd?"—or when he denounced the contemptuous negligence of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe towards Colonel Williams who defended Kars, in the words, "If Lord Stratford had been a Russian noble and had so behaved, before taking his seat in the House of Peers and going on a special mission to Constantinople, *he would have had the advantage of going on a special mission to Siberia*,"—he contrives, with an art that he exercises a dozen times in every one of his great orations, to bind the notion which he wishes to ridicule as a humiliated captive to the car of that which he intends to triumph. No form of eloquence expresses a deeper sense of bitterness, or at least of internecine war of feeling, than irony, and it is because Mr. Bright feels so sternly the contrast between the bald simplicity of his own creed and the forces of historic usage and human feeling which he has to contend with, that it pervades his whole mind and speeches as it does.

Perhaps for a similar reason Mr. Bright cannot be said to be a powerful political reasoner. His intellect is scarcely sufficiently *at liberty*, to reason; he is too much occupied with the paradoxes of political fact and feeling. In the great free-trade agitation Mr. Cobden probably convinced a hundred, who did not agree with him before, to every one converted by Mr. Bright; indeed, we doubt whether the latter ever gained a pure intellectual victory at all, though he no doubt has often awakened passionate democratic yearnings in minds in which they had previously been latent or subdued. It may be said of him as Dr. Johnson said of "Junius"—"As a rhetorician he has had the art of persuading when he seconded desire; as a reasoner he has convinced those who had no doubt before." There is no intellectual *patience* in him (which is the necessary condition of all successful reasoning), though there is plenty of industry. Mr. Bright's rhetorical strength has almost always consisted in *assuming* the falsehood and even the wickedness of his adversaries' position, and repelling it *in limine* as unworthy of anything but denunciation. He can

never feel sufficient sympathy with an opponent's view to attempt to convince him. All he does is to inspire his followers with enthusiasm and his foes with wrath. Mr. Bright has never, as far as we know, given detailed attention to the expenditure he so keenly denounces, because he has no patience to persuade the House of Commons that they might save 100,000*l.* on *their own* principles, when he is angry—and thinks he does well to be angry—with them for not saving 10,000,000*l.* on *his*. His mind is not a persuading mind, but a withstanding mind. In a Cabinet we should infer that he would be either useless or dangerous.

We do not say he is not capable of moderation, but it is of revolutionary moderation—of moderation in applying a totally different set of principles from those by which our statesmen have hitherto been guided. He would take a rating suffrage if statesmen would give up arguing for a representation of thoughts and interests. He would, perhaps, consent to keep up a large volunteer force for defence, if statesmen would shatter finally their "foul idol" of balance of power, and reduce the army forthwith

to a purely defensive standard. He would very likely consent to devote ecclesiastical property to the education of the people, if the "adulterous" connection between Church and State could be dissolved. He might even favour life-peers for a House of Lords if he could get rid of the hereditary principle. He is not an immoderate man in working out his own principles, but utterly intolerant of the principles of his foes. If a democratic revolution ever succeeded in England, Mr. Bright would probably act the part of a stronger and abler Lamartine. But if he tries the part of a constitutional statesman, carrying out the accepted principles of the present day, he will either destroy the Government or injure himself.

XVI.

MR. COBDEN.

THE distinguished man who passes to-day* from one of the great political forces of England into a memory and a tradition—a tradition, however, that will ever form an essential part of that strong mid-stream of political moving force which we call English history—has been without doubt the greatest benefactor to the "toiling millions of men sunk in labour and pain,"—the "dim, common populations," as Carlyle half pityingly and half contemptuously calls them,—amongst all the many benefactors of that kind in whom our century has been so rich. The Reform Act was a great step toward the elevation of

* Published on the day of Mr. Cobden's funeral, 7th April, 1865.

the masses, but it affected the *happiness* of the lower classes chiefly by opening the way to free trade. Since the great manufacturing industry of England sprang into existence, there have been many periods when it has been seriously questioned whether English manufactures were not injuring instead of benefiting the poorer classes of England. For a year or two before, and a year or two after Mr. Cobden entered Parliament in 1841, the state of the North was so variable, and generally so miserable, that his adversaries the Protectionists did not hesitate to taunt the manufacturers with the selfishness and the tyranny of which they themselves were in truth guilty. To Mr. Cobden, undoubtedly, it is due that all these vain dreams of over-production and superfluous industrial energy in which Tory statesmen used to indulge have vanished for ever. The England the prosperity of which cotton crises and widespread war can scarcely so much as check, whose revenue rises in spite of heavy taxation remitted, whose working classes are accumulating a capital of their own, and becoming a new power in the State,—this England is an England of Mr. Cobden's making. We shall

often be compelled to look back at the remarkable man who, from the son of a Sussex yeoman, from a mere commercial traveller on behalf of a business not his own, became the power which has more than doubled the resources of his country, and given a far greater impulse than any man in our own time to the general industry of Europe.

Mr. Disraeli has spoken of Mr. Cobden with his usual felicity in hitting off the superficial impress of a parliamentary character, but he has been sharply criticized for saying that Mr. Cobden was "the greatest political character the pure middle class of this country ever produced," on the ground that Edmund Burke is better entitled to that honour. The middle class, however, is a vague term, and comprehends within its limits many men who by essence are not closely identified with it. Mr. Cobden may be fairly called the genius of English *commerce*, for his intellect had all the susceptibility and delicacy as well as the force of genius, when applied within the limits of the commercial principle, but beyond the boundary of that principle his power seemed to expire, and the magic of his nervous eloquence to

fade away. Lord Palmerston was exceedingly unhappy in the term Demosthenic which he applied to Mr. Cobden's oratorical power. No doubt passages of nervous invective against mischievous principles—seldom indeed against persons—may be produced from many of his speeches both in the Anti-Corn-law League and in Parliament, passages which lashed his antagonists of that day into fury; for, as Mr. Disraeli truly said, Mr. Cobden was "by no means insensible to political excitement." For example, he spoke in the House, of the Corn-law as "a law begotten in violence, baptized in blood, perpetuated at the expense of the tears and groans of the people, and he prayed to God it might not end in violence, which the conduct of Parliament in refusing to discuss it had without doubt a tendency to provoke." But in spite of this sort of intensity, which a strong imagination, vividly realizing the enormity of needless suffering, now and then called forth in Mr. Cobden, the large sensitiveness of his nature was in political life almost entirely used up, not in hostile criticism, but in those intellectual *feelers*, if we may use the expression, which he put out to discover the surest appeal to the

interests of his opponents. The hottest speeches which Mr. Cobden ever made are almost from beginning to end arguments addressed to the prudence and self-interest of his antagonists. He had such profound faith in the wide utilitarianism on which the theory of commerce rests, that he could not threaten, he could not denounce, he could not pass judgment, while the far simpler course, as it seemed to him, of *persuading*, of imparting to his foes his own intimate sense of what was really expedient for them, still remained open. Mr. Cobden, in truth, found it difficult to believe earnestly in those political passions, and prejudices deeper than self-interest, which constitute so large a part of the motive of political life. Not that self-interest formed any large element in his own nature, for its almost feminine tenderness and sensitiveness were conspicuous enough, and have been attested since his death in the pathetic tribute of his closest political friend, Mr. Bright. But Mr. Cobden was a utilitarian in *feeling* in very much the same sense in which the most unselfish women are practically utilitarians. The logic of utilitarian sentiment, of utilitarian feeling for others,

springing from a disinterested source, is in fact far more trenchant and (in an intellectual sense) *Jacobin*, than the logic of mere reason. Personal affections once assumed—to which no true woman is ever disloyal—women show usually little sympathy with, or power even to appreciate, the whims and scruples of pride, tradition, and consistency, which form so large a part of men's sense of dignity, and interfere so often with their chance of happiness. For *another*, there is no more thorough-going utilitarian than a disinterested woman, and Mr. Cobden, with all his manly force of imagination for intellectual problems and the pure disinterestedness of his public life, had not a little of this trenchant utilitarianism of feeling, which could scarcely apprehend the state of mind of those who *would* not see their true interest.

And not only was Mr. Cobden's utilitarianism almost feminine in the complete sway of interest over him, but the taste which it formed, the fine tact and sense for an adaptation of means to the end which he had in view, had a beauty and delicacy about them which, though always utilitarian in type, were of a refined order. There is a utilitarian

taste which of its kind is no less fine than the sense of beauty itself. Mr. Cobden's taste of this sort was almost perfect. We are told that he first among manufacturers introduced the practice of selecting, without tentative experiments on the public taste, the patterns for print gowns which were intended for the widest sale, and that the Cobden prints, as they were called, had actually an unrivalled popularity. We can easily imagine it, for his sense of the suitable was always fine, but he showed it in a far higher field than in the Cobden prints—in the Cobden speeches. It is impossible to find in popular orators any sample of finer taste in the arrangement of what the speaker had to say and the manner of saying it. The secret of course was the same. The man was filled with one aim, and one only—to convince his audience how their interests lay; and he absolutely identified himself with them for the moment in order to bring those interests home to them. There was something quite French in the lucidity of his imaginative method, in the natural orderliness of his thought. He would *clinch* every argument, too, with an image as sharp and apt as any French

thinker. And no doubt his keen political sympathy with France was partly the sympathy of intellectual affinity as well as of enlightened theory. When he told us, only about two years ago, that if the re-opening of the Southern cotton-trade was the only motive for war with the North, it would be far cheaper for us to keep the whole cotton population of Lancashire and Yorkshire "on turtle-soup and champagne" throughout the famine than to buy the cotton at the price of war,—he forced even the strongest Confederate to abandon the idea of pressing the *expediency* argument for war any further. All his illustrations and arguments were exquisitely clean cut, and had all the vivacity of conversation about them. We have heard him explain the working of differential duties on colonial sugar to a great miscellaneous audience at Drury Lane with as much felicity, ease, and success as if he had been turning off brilliant appeals to the feelings, like some of his more ornamental colleagues. He entered so completely into the general interests of others that there was no more sense of disquisition or abstract argument in such an exposition than there would be to

a private investor in listening to an experienced man's explanation of the advantages of the particular purchase or sale which he was contemplating. He carried the utilitarian sentiment, which is not selfishness but unselfishness when it devotes itself to vivify the sense of other people's interests, to the height of real imaginative power.

We shall not feel Mr. Cobden's loss the less, that he was always and to the last too deeply attached to his own liberty, too sensitive in his genius, too limited in his basis of political principle, to become the head of a party, or a member of the Government. The sensitiveness which he showed in his controversies with the *Times*, and occasionally in noticing the criticisms of younger Liberals who did not quite agree with him, was no doubt part and essence of the very same fibre of sentiment which made his commercial theory so vivid and attractive. If he had not identified himself with the utilitarian principle as no other man ever did, if he had not been as it were the *optic nerve* of English commerce, he could not have made a subject usually cold and abstract teem with life and interest. But then, the very same sensitive

utilitarianism made him shrink back in pain when his favourite principle was rudely assailed by some younger Liberal, who saw, or thought he saw, the limits within which it must be confined. And this sensitiveness to his friends' or party's opposition, this irritability of a fine but limited genius, rendered him almost incapable of that habit of compromise, of that suffering of sacrificed conviction, which are essential both to party organization and the co-operation of a Cabinet. The chief weakness of a self-developed genius, its excessive tenderness and attachment to the intellectual offspring it has travailed with so long and painfully, was strong in Mr. Cobden. No one would have made a greater administrator if he had only been up to the intellectual pain of compromise. It is said that only this year he refused Mr. Gladstone's offer of the chairmanship of the Board of Audit, with a salary of 2,000*l.* a year—an income to which he could not afford to be indifferent—with the remark that its duties would be a constant source of suffering to him, and that he could not bear to study the details of a national extravagance and recklessness which he should have no

power to control. Nothing could be more characteristic of the living sentiment pervading all his economical theory, which made Mr. Cobden at once so great a reformer and so unable to bear the pressure of party ties. The accounts of the army expenditure would have been "a sword in his bones." The sum-totals of the heavy ordnance would have sounded like cannon in his ears. The iron-plated ships would have been heavy on his conscience. The receipts for the sugar-duties would have been dust and ashes in his mouth. He would have felt like an evangelical who had come in for an intoned service and lighted candles on the altar, or a great musician listening to a murdered mass of Beethoven's or Mozart's. The sensitiveness of his genius has been hidden from us partly on account of the prosaic nature of his subject. But in truth Mr. Cobden was one of the *genus irritabile*. He was not a poet, indeed, but his mind was as vivid and single in its apprehensions of his own subject, as luminous in its expressiveness, as sensitive to criticism, and as full of the scrupulous nobility of pure intellectual interests, as any poet's. For the political life of England, we

hold his utilitarianism altogether too narrow. But it was never the utilitarianism of a coarse or selfish nature. It was the delicate utilitarianism of a mind *possessed* by one class of truths which, had they not possessed him thus wholly, he would probably have scarcely forced England to share with him as he did.

XVII.

LORD PALMERSTON.

THE great statesman who for all but sixty years has been a part, generally a great part, latterly the greatest part, of the counsels of the English nation, is no more. The man who at the age of eighty-one could retain the full confidence of the English people, disarm opposition, and unite the conflicting factions of his own party, is not merely a curiosity of political history, but one whom all England will regret as embodying many of the most typical qualities of the most truly political national character which the world ever produced—the qualities which have made England a successful political nation.

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* October, 1865.

Indeed, Lord Palmerston's political character grew up to its full force almost with the slow and imperceptible advances of a nation's, rather than an individual's mind, yet without the fits and starts of most national developments—slowly, and without remark. Lord Palmerston's parliamentary career alone lasted throughout two complete generations, and yet during the whole sixty years there was no vicissitude other than that of party in his political position. His was a steady and regular growth in influence, both relative and positive, from political infancy to political age. He was a statesman years before Lord John Russell entered Parliament, though then on the opposite side of the House, and yet Lord John Russell passed him easily and quickly in the race. When they both became members of the Reform Administration, Lord Palmerston was a Cabinet Minister and Lord John Russell a mere subordinate—Paymaster of the Forces—but only a year or two later Lord John was the acknowledged head of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, and Lord Palmerston a comparatively insignificant member of the Government. It is curious to note

the *relative* estimate of these two great men a generation ago, and compare it with that of our own day. Sydney Smith wrote in 1836:—"Lord John Russell is beyond all comparison the ablest man in the whole Administration, and to such a degree is he superior that the Government could not exist a moment without him. If the Foreign Secretary (Lord Palmerston) were to retire, we should no longer be nibbling ourselves into disgrace on the coast of Spain. If the amiable Lord Glenelg were to leave us, we should feel secure in our colonial possessions; if Mr. Spring Rice were to go into holy orders, great would be the joy of the Three per Cents. A decent, good-looking head of the Government might easily enough be found in lieu of Viscount Melbourne; but in five minutes after the departure of Lord John Russell, the whole Whig Government would be dissolved into sparks of liberality and splinters of reform." What will be said by equally shrewd observers now, after the lapse of nearly thirty years? Would it not be nearly as follows:—"Lord Palmerston's was beyond all comparison the soundest head in the whole Ad-

ministration, and to such a degree was he superior that the Government was not expected to hold together at all without him. If the Foreign Secretary (Lord Russell) had retired, we should no longer have been in danger of nibbling ourselves into disgrace at St. Petersburg and Berlin. If the amiable Mr. Cardwell had left us we should have felt more secure of New Zealand. If Mr. Gladstone had gone into holy orders, great would have been the dismay of the Opposition at losing the principal target for their party arrows. A decent and good-looking leader of the Government in the House of Lords might easily have been found in place of Lord Granville; but five minutes after the death of Lord Palmerston it was a current, if not a well-grounded belief, that the Liberal Government must be immediately dissolved into sparks of liberality and splinters of reform." There is something, surely, not a little remarkable in this change of relative position achieved by Lord Palmerston, especially in relation to Lord John Russell, and achieved *not* between youth and maturity, but between maturity and old age. At the time Sydney Smith wrote of him as an element of

weakness, and of Lord John Russell as the sole bulwark of the Government, Lord Palmerston had already passed his fiftieth birthday. When, during the Crimean war, he first left in the rear the younger rival who had so easily beaten him a quarter of a century before, he was more than seventy. And for the last six years of his political life, out of all the Cabinet of which he was the head, he was almost the sole object of popular trust and confidence. How are we to account for this?

It certainly was not due either to large knowledge or pure intellectual power. For Lord Palmerston was not a learned politician of Sir Cornewall Lewis's type; and though his understanding was lucid, it was far from original. He was a much better judge of actions and men than of truth. He always confessed to deriving his notions of free-trade from Mr. Huskisson, and of general politics from Mr. Canning; and no one can accuse him of ever developing further for himself a single general principle accepted by either of them. You could have counted his principles on the fingers of one hand. He believed in putting down the slave-trade,

and he hated secret voting,—both as articles of the good old political code of honour—the knightly code adopted into the aristocratic society of his youth. He believed, further, that Turkey must be guarded against Russia, and Egypt and Syria against France; that a strong Austrian Empire was essential to the balance of power: the three articles of the old Foreign-office creed. Whether he believed aught else to the bottom of his heart, perhaps no man shall ever know. It is not a large stock of political ideas, and the last one or two of its five points are far from clear to the best statesmanship of to-day; but probably Lord Palmerston thought all these articles of belief, as near as he could approximate to laws of thought. His strength as a statesman was clearly *not* due to the political furniture of his mind. Neither was it to the intellectual. Lord Palmerston's views on extra-political subjects were the "light of nature" views of an unthinking, complacent, good-natured man. When he enunciated his theological axiom at Romsey—was it not that "all children are born good"?—he was quite guiltless of what the Church calls formal heresy. He

had no idea anybody could think anything else. How could they be bad till they had been naughty? that was Lord Palmerston's thought. In pure intellect Lord Palmerston was what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls a Philistine. He saw no distinctions but such as were visible to the unpurged eye.

We believe that in great measure he achieved his extraordinary success as a politician, like the English nation itself, if we may be allowed the paradox, *by not being too political*—by being to a considerable extent impervious to the agitations of politics, even when he was applying the strongest impulse of a strong character and will to politics, and when politics were most agitating. This, of course, is the quality which enabled him to sustain in his old age a weight of responsibility, than which a very much smaller load has already furrowed Mr. Gladstone's face with care while still a comparatively young man, and which bids fair to be one of his principal hindrances if he should ever succeed to the mantle of his chief. And this, too, is the quality which fitted Lord Palmerston to be the favourite Premier of a quietly Liberal period which does not

desire any needless political excitement, and yet objects to be led by any one who cannot enter heartily into the actual life of the hour. Except Lord Melbourne, who carried the *light* treatment of politics to an extreme, and probably never gave the full force of his character at all to achieving political success, as Lord Palmerston has done, there has not been one of Lord Palmerston's greater colleagues whose mind has not been far more carried away by special currents and, so to say, political sectarianisms, than his own. Hence, no doubt, his comparative insignificance during the sectarian eras of politics—during the Reform era, when a man who, like Lord John Russell, was literally immersed in the constitutional question, was sure to take the lead; and again during the financial era which followed, when a certain financial and economical pre-occupation like Mr. Cobden's was needed for conspicuous success. But hence also, we think, his success as a War Minister and Foreign Secretary, each of whom must, if he is to succeed, have a head which keeps clear above the danger of *immersion* in diplomatic tangles or peace negotiations, a

head as strong and vigilant for considerations *outside* the particular interests involved as for those within them. And hence, also, still more, Lord Palmerston's greatest success—his success as a Premier in a time of keen political jealousies but cool political desires.

And the reason of this comparatively unpolitical character was this:—Lord Palmerston was by essence a statesman of the old Continental school—of the school of Talleyrand, Metternich, and Gentz: not, of course, that we mean to speak of him as rivalling some of these gentlemen in finesse, but as founding his statesmanship on the same sort of personal qualities—the qualities which teach a man how to compass ends by alertness, suspicion, and the adroit use of diplomatic baits and diplomatic combinations. In other words, he became a statesman by the use of the qualities which made him a first-rate man of the world, rather than by qualities distinctly political. There are now many other qualities besides worldly coolness and sagacity which promote greatly a politician's favour with the public; such as scholarship, financial sagacity, and eager

sympathy with the people; and some of our statesmen possess them who will scarcely ever be precisely men of the world so long as they live in it. Lord Russell, for instance, would never have the ease and instinct of a man of the world, even if he could get rid of that touch of the dissenting minister which mingles so oddly in his aristocratic strength and pride. Mr. Gladstone would never be exactly a man of the world, even if he ceased to revel in theoretic distinctions. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who used to say that the world would be very tolerable *but* for its enjoyments, in spite of all the coolness that tempered his great simplicity of character, would never have been precisely a man of the world. Yet these are the men of whom we all think first when we ask ourselves the difference between the new type of statesmanship and that of Lord Palmerston. There must be something of the man of pleasure about the essential man of the world;—the absence of the higher earnestness which interferes so much with a cool measurement of men and things. It would have been impossible for a statesman of the old school to fret himself about finance for its own sake,

or otherwise than as a step to power. It would have been impossible for a statesman of that school to worry himself about the astronomy of the ancients and Bunsen's Egyptology, and not even very easy to identify himself passionately with any theory of the franchise. But to such statesmen it was always possible to take a very deep interest in the *game* of politics, especially of political diplomacy, to delight in trying to sound the purposes of foreign statesmen, to use or defeat those purposes, and to magnify the influence of their own country at the expense of its rivals. And to this class of statesmen Lord Palmerston essentially belonged.

We see it at once when we consider what Lord Palmerston did, and what he did not do. Though for near sixty years he was a member of the House of Commons,—though of these he was forty-five in office, twenty-five in the Cabinet, and seven at the head of the Government,—yet he seldom spoke on any great question of domestic interest—Ireland, for example, with which his ties were unusually close, and his sympathies as earnest as it was in his nature to feel—without reminding us that the impress of

his thought was never stamped upon any great subject of home policy. He spoke last year of Irish emigration in words exceedingly like those which he used on the same subject in 1828, and it is obvious that the question made little if any progress in his mind from that day to his death. Yet if there was any domestic question on which Lord Palmerston's sympathies were roused in his younger days, it was the grievances of the Irish Catholics, which would naturally have led him to grapple with the whole question of the Irish administration. But, in truth, Lord Palmerston was incapable of entering into what we may call the modern scientific spirit in politics. For twenty years after he entered official life, he attended Parliament rather as a man attends his club than as a statesman attends the assembly through which he exercises his influence over the world. During that time his diplomatic faculties, his ease, his judgment, his self-possession, his knowledge of men, were no doubt in training in aristocratic drawing-rooms and the fashionable world. But it was not the training for a political student; not the training to lead to a sound judgment on domestic

questions through a minute knowledge of facts and laws; nor even the training to make a statesman care to win for its own sake the trust and sympathy of the people. When at length the brilliant powers of Canning awakened his sleeping ambition, and roused him into active political life, it was but natural that he should select foreign politics as the field best calculated for his powers, and least likely to remind him of his deficiencies.

It would be unfair to call Lord Palmerston the Major Pendennis of politics; for not only would this fail to express the breadth of his geniality and good sense, but also there is nothing in the mere *savoir faire* of the shrewd old Ulysses of the London clubs which at all corresponds to the greatness of aim implied in exercising the same sort of worldly address to promote the real or fancied interests of a great nation. Still, as indicating the *kind* of shrewdness whereon Lord Palmerston's fame as a foreign minister was founded, and the loose definition, though not the greatness, of the aims, into the service of which that shrewdness was pressed, the illustration, otherwise misleading, would be an adequate one. As

Major Pendennis took up, without questioning, the traditions of the fashionable world, and played his game accordingly, so Lord Palmerston accepted, without questioning, the traditions of the Foreign-office as to the interests of England, and played his game accordingly—not without some failures, but also not without brilliant successes.

And this cool, shrewd, worldly sagacity Lord Palmerston always displayed as a foreign minister. No view of Lord Palmerston will less stand the test of examination than that which generally prevailed of him about twenty years ago, as a rash, hot-headed, impetuous Foreign Secretary. We do not say that interference with foreign nations was not part of his theory of foreign policy, and at one time a much more important part of his theory than in recent years. But there has never been a time when he had not a head cool enough to weigh cautiously even his own favourite political projects, and to sacrifice them decisively where he saw them to be impracticable—which is one of his greatest distinctions from Lord Russell—though also a head bold enough to take great responsibility upon himself when he saw

success within his reach. Lord Palmerston's unwillingness to act without clear hope of success was really a more conspicuous feature of his foreign policy than the two or three great *coups* by which he is remembered. His greatest single achievement—the one brilliant stroke of which he was himself probably most proud—was the triple defeat of Russia, France, and Mehemet Ali, in 1840. Yet this happy stroke did but retrieve a series of failures in our Eastern policy in which, from the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi up to the rupture which ended in the capture of Acre, Lord Palmerston had acquiesced because he knew that he had no adequate resources for success. Indeed, looking to Lord Palmerston's views and traditionary principles, the remarkable feature about his policy is rather the number of cases in which he *refrained* from attempting what he wished, from motives of caution, than the number of cases in which he did anything hazardous for what he deemed a great end. He accepted many humiliations from Russia, some severe humiliations from France, at least one grave humiliation from Spain, and one even from Naples, rather than risk war. He saw

his policy defeated in Italy; he allowed Austria to swallow Cracow in violation of the treaty of Vienna; he acquiesced, perhaps wrongly, in the shameful Russian intervention in Hungary; he permitted France to annex Savoy and Nice, again in violation, as he believed, of the Vienna treaty; he looked on while Russia trampled out the recent Polish revolution in the face of his remonstrances; last, and no doubt for him worst, he was passive, in deference to the will of the nation and the force of circumstances, when the treaty of 1852, securing the succession in Denmark, was torn up by Prussia and Austria. In all these cases we may be sure that the diplomatist was mortified, but the caution of the statesman triumphed. No Minister who could boast of great successes and made his name respected and even feared, not only in the great capitals of Europe, but among the tents of the wandering Arabs and in he very heart of Persia, ever denied himself his own wishes oftener from motives of prudence. Indeed no accurate observer can doubt that Lord Palmerston was at heart on the side of the South in the great civil war in America that has just closed, or can

fail to admire the tenacity with which he held to neutrality, both in speech and action, and amidst many trying conjunctures, from motives either of justice or of policy. Review his career as a whole, especially in relation to his own traditional policy, and no charge will seem less true than the charge that he was, as Mr. Roebuck once termed him, a diplomatic lucifer-match—one from whom opposition always struck fire, and often the dangerous fire which results in a conflagration.

Nor will any one deny him a real courage, and this not merely in the face of foreign opposition, but in the face of popular discouragement. When Turkey first applied to him for help against Mehemet Ali, with a clear warning that if he could not give it she must go to Russia, Lord Palmerston knew that England had no navy, and moreover was priding herself on her destitution. For years he had to fight against much more discouragement at home than opposition abroad before he got either sympathy or means to check the Russian designs. And he never shrank before a popular cry. Take, for instance, his conduct in 1858, when deliberately thrown out of

office for deferring too readily in his Conspiracy Bill to the suggestions of Louis Napoleon, and when the wrath ran high against him for his Imperialist leanings. Who does not remember the surprise of the English public in learning that he chose the autumn of that very year to visit the Emperor at Compiègne? or the coolness with which on his return to power in 1859, during the panic caused by the French invasion of Italy, Lord Palmerston deliberately reversed the unfriendly attitude of Lord Malmesbury towards France, and so gained for England the influence which, after the defeat of the Austrian army and the Convention of Villafranca, was used with such splendid results for the freedom of Italy? Lord Palmerston never quailed before a temporary popular outcry when pursuing a policy which he had once adopted.

Loyal and generous to his friends, dangerous but never unfair to his foes, aristocratic rather than popular in his preferences, liberal—that is, a free *giver*—rather than democratic—or a popular *demander*—in his political principles, and in his own statesmanship shrewd, ambitious, self-contained,

Europe and England alike lose in him the last of a great race, the politicians of the *salon*. Even Lord Russell, his oldest colleague, and far more Mr. Gladstone, the greatest living statesman of the next generation, mark a new era—the era of politicians of a creed—a class more earnest, more anxious, more identified with specific principles and "causes," than Lord Palmerston, but on that very account more sensitive, often more narrow, more pliant to temporary gusts of opinion, more in danger of sacrificing honourable ties and personal obligations to abstract principles. The ease, freedom, shrewdness of judgment, and keen jealousy of diminishing our national weight in the counsels of Europe, which marked the school of Canning, made a great historical figure of Lord Palmerston; and henceforth no single personality is ever likely to be associated more closely with the name of England either in the West or in the East. He was certainly one of the greatest of those statesmen—

> Who know the seasons when to take
> Occasion by the hand, and make
> The bounds of freedom wider yet.

May only the new school of greater depth, more scrupulous conscience, more anxious temperament, accomplish as much both for England and for freedom.

His great attraction as a statesman was the curious blending of social ease, kindliness, and humour with the temper of a strong, hard man of the world. He was essentially a masculine politician. He stood to the other statesmen of his day much in the same relative position in which public-school boys stand to home-bred boys. He denounced "the puerile vanity of consistency," and had no scorn too great for political "romance." "As to the romantic notion," he said, "that nations or governments are much or permanently influenced by friendships, and God knows what, why I say that those who maintain those romantic notions, and apply the intercourse of individuals to the intercourse of nations, are indulging in a vain dream. The only thing which makes one government follow the advice of another is the hope of benefit to accrue from adopting it, or the fear of the consequences of opposing it." There you see the hardness at the bottom of Lord Palmerston's

politics, the kind of strength which in his best day enabled him in a divided Cabinet, and with European dangers threatening him on every side, to defeat at once Russia, France, and Mehemet Ali. And yet on this hard kernel of character was grafted the ease and almost fresh schoolboy humour which, late, indeed, in his career (for he had to wait for success till the domestic questions to which he was unequal were cleared out of the way), but completely at last, fascinated England. He was not earnest, but he was easy and genial. He was not eloquent, but he could enjoy and give enjoyment. He was not witty, but he was playful and even humorous. This was a very fascinating quality in a man of that worldly sense which usually has a touch of cynicism. When a tiresome Tory catechist asked him if a Junior Lordship of the Treasury was vacant and was to be filled up, and Lord Palmerston with seeming hesitation replied that it was vacant, that he did mean to fill it up, and then in dumb show telegraphed that he should not mind bribing his tiresome questioner to desert his party for the office if he would accept it, not only the House, but all England, laughed at the

humour of the retort on a bore. This pleasantry of an accomplished man of the world turned a dull and painstaking assembly into a lively society, which taught the nation true vivacity as well as practical wisdom. It was a lesson we needed. It will long be remembered of Lord Palmerston, that in a day when earnestness was becoming a little pompous, and the only check upon it was a far more odious cynicism, he kept up amongst us the habit of laughing at what was laughable, without malice and without conceit.

THE END.

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